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*Washington Allston*





# *Washington Allston*

A STUDY OF THE ROMANTIC  
ARTIST IN AMERICA

*By*

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## Preface

IN THIS volume I have returned to a problem which I discussed in *The Way of Western Art*: What was the nature of that impulse toward an ideal and monumental art which was the first independent movement of American painting as it emerged from its apprenticeship in the Colonial portrait tradition? In modern times this ambitious, imaginative movement has been treated with nothing but ridicule as a preposterous failure, and, to some extent, in the previous study I accepted that unfavorable judgment, although with misgivings, so far as American painting was concerned. It was indeed a failure for the painters who took part in the movement: lack of patronage and lack of adequate architectural settings for their pictures brought tragic disappointment to them all with one exception, and that, in some ways the least interesting of them, Benjamin West. Yet those of Allston's works which I had seen at that time did not look like failures; they were individual and strangely haunting pictures, obviously the work of an exceptional talent, although the aesthetic ideals of his period (1800-1840) differed widely from ours. But there had been no exhibition of Allston's works since 1881. No one in the twentieth century had cared to investigate him again. Even the location of many of the pictures on which his contemporary fame rested was unknown. It seemed important to study him more carefully than I had then had opportunity to do, not only for his own sake but as perhaps the key to the question of his whole period.

Allston is interesting also as a type of the artistic imagination. The problems of the imagination do not change so rapidly as the outward circumstances of life but remain to a large extent constant. To a great

## PREFACE

degree the problems of the American artist in Allston's time are those of the American artist of our time. The absence of a strong technical tradition, the relation between inspiration and conscious art, between originality and tradition, between our awareness of what other peoples are doing and our awareness of ourselves, the general relation of the artist to his society and of the imaginative life to practical life—all these have changed little since Allston's day. One might almost say that the problems left unresolved by the Romanticists have become the problems we must face today.

A great piece of good fortune came to me at the outset of this investigation. Mr. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow Dana, the great-grand-nephew of the artist, was also interested in studying the life of Allston. Instead of finding in him a potential rival, I found a most generous and helpful collaborator and a friend in whose wit and good sense, deep loyalties, and incorrigible independence of mind were embodied the best traditions of New England. His generosity in opening to me all the resources of the Dana Collection and of family tradition has been equaled by his help in our mutual search for the lost works. We agreed that I was to do a critical study of Allston's art and his place in romantic painting, he a biography of Allston as artist and man, on which he is now working. I owe also a special debt to Mr. W. G. Constable and the entire staff of the department of painting, the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, for many kindnesses and much help. I wish to express my gratitude to Miss Anna Wells Rutledge, who has been of great assistance; the staff of the Frick Art Reference Library; Miss Sarah W. Toomer, librarian of the Gibbs Art Gallery, Charleston, South Carolina; Miss Frances Hubbert, librarian of the Redwood Library and Athenaeum, Newport, Rhode Island; Mr. Ernest Flagg, Mrs. Charles Scribner, and the Countess Szechenyi, of New York City; Mr. Lloyd Goodrich, of the Whitney Museum of American Art; Mr. Maxim Karolik, of Newport and Boston; Mr. Stewart Mitchell, of the Massachusetts Historical Society; Mr. Walter Whitehill and Miss Margery Crandall, of the Boston Athenaeum; Mr. John Davis Hatch, Jr.; Mr. Theodore Sizer and Mr.

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E. P. RICHARDSON

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## *Chapter One*

### The History of a Reputation

WASHINGTON ALLSTON is the chief figure of the first group of American artists to appear after the American Revolution. Born in 1779, halfway through the War for Independence, he represents the first generation which had no memories of what the world was like before the political separation from Europe. He was the most able and many-sided figure of that generation, which initiated our earliest national movement in painting, and was the pioneer in creating an ideal art upon American soil. The passage in our artistic life within which his achievement falls—the “historical style” was what the nineteenth century called the movement of romantic idealism—is one which has for a long time been out of fashion. But the initial independent efforts of most of those men who first made the world aware, some one hundred and fifty years ago, that this country had begun to produce artists were toward the creation of a monumental and ideal art. Their fame died out in the second half of the nineteenth century. In the twentieth century these works have been treated almost universally with pitying amusement, as examples of absurdity and failure. Yet one may wonder why the earliest ambitious efforts of American painting should arouse only ridicule instead of curiosity to inquire what caused these artists to be what they are.

In the first half of the nineteenth century, by common consent of most Americans and Europeans in a position to have an opinion, Allston was considered the greatest painter we had produced. When he returned to America in 1818 after seven years in England, Coleridge described him in a letter to a friend as a man of “high and rare genius . . . whether

I contemplate him in the character of a Poet, a Painter, or a philosophic Analyst."<sup>1</sup> His distinction of character and his personal charm made a deep impression upon all who met him. A note jotted down by Longfellow many years after Allston's death illustrates the flavor of his personality. "One man may sweeten a whole town. I never pass through Cambridge Port without thinking of Allston. His memory is the quince in the drawer, and perfumes the atmosphere."<sup>2</sup>

In the second half of the nineteenth century, artists revolted violently against their predecessors' artistic ideals, and a new movement of taste came to believe in the failure of the romantic contribution to American culture. The battle of realism against idealism in the arts was fought and won. In this new era Allston was considered to have been a charming person but an artistic failure. This notion appears first among the much-traveled Americans who represent international culture of the closing decades of the nineteenth century. Thomas G. Appleton, in his introduction to the Boston Museum of Fine Arts exhibition of Allston in 1881, was the earliest to adopt the affectionate but deprecating attitude toward him that was to become customary thereafter.

The belief in the failure of the romantic movement was a characteristic trend of thought in the later years of the nineteenth century not only in the United States but throughout the world. Henry James formulated it for the Boston tradition in particular in his biography of the sculptor, W. W. Story, published in 1903. Henry Adams, after reading it, wrote to James: "The painful truth is that all of my New England generation, counting the half century, 1820-1870, were in actual fact only one mind and nature. . . . One cannot exaggerate the profundity of ignorance of Story in becoming a sculptor, or Sumner in becoming a statesman, or Emerson in becoming a philosopher. Story and Sumner, Emerson and Alcott, Lowell and Longfellow, Hillard, Winthrop, Motley, Prescott, and all the rest, were the same mind,—and so, poor worm, was I! God knows that we knew our want of knowledge! The self-dis-

1. Earl Leslie Griggs (ed.), *Unpublished Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* (2 vols.; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1933), II, 305-6.

2. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, memorandum of October 26, 1860.

trust became introspection—nervous self-consciousness—irritable dislike of America, and antipathy to Boston. . . . Improvised Europeans, we were, and—Lord God!—how thin!”<sup>3</sup>

Out of this mood among intellectual leaders of that time has grown an impression of Allston’s failure that prevented the discussion or even the exhibition of many of Allston’s best works after that last exhibit of 1881, although other romantic artists who were once out of fashion have since received a well-deserved re-estimate.<sup>4</sup> Henry Adams and Henry James in their turn passed through a period of rejection. These changes in mental climate are inevitable and fruitful. They are the method by which each generation does its work. But they are also filled with the exaggerations of one generation’s revolt against another.

Such discussion of Washington Allston as the twentieth century has produced betrays a great degree of misinformation about when he worked, what he produced, and what his life was like. The article on Allston in the *Dictionary of American Biography* says, for example, that “he decided to return to America [in 1818]. And with this resolve, his career as an artist terminated.” Yet in 1839 there was an exhibition of forty-seven of his works in Chester Harding’s studio, Boston, of which nineteen were done after his return to America. There are, besides these, at least twenty-two other pictures of this period, perhaps more. More important than the number, the two best art critics who saw his American work—Mrs. Jameson, the English art historian who visited Boston in 1838,<sup>5</sup> and Margaret van Rensselaer, who saw the retrospective Allston exhibit of 1881<sup>6</sup>—considered the late American works the most original and distinctive phase of his art.

Another kind of misconception appears in *Romanticism in America* (Johns Hopkins Symposium, 1940), where Allston is grouped with

3. Worthington Chauncey Ford (ed.), *Letters of Henry Adams (1892-1918)* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1938), p. 414.

4. An exhibition of paintings and drawings by Allston was arranged by the Detroit Institute of Arts and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, in the summer of 1946, in connection with the preparation of this book.

5. Anna Jameson, “Washington Allston,” *Athenaeum* (London), 1844, p. 16.

6. M. G. van Rensselaer, “Washington Allston, A.R.A.,” *Magazine of Art* (Cassell’s), XII (1889), 145.

"the American men of 1830"—Hiram Powers, Horatio Greenough, and Thomas Cole. By "men of 1830" is, of course, meant the generation of romanticism which in France included Delacroix, Corot, Théodore Rousseau, and Millet. Allston's first picture that was exhibited publicly (at the British Institution, London, in 1802) was painted probably about 1798. Thomas Cole was born in 1801; Greenough and Powers in 1805; 1798 was the year of Delacroix's birth, two years after the birth of Corot, fourteen years before the birth of Rousseau, and sixteen years before the birth of Millet. Allston's activity is thus misplaced a whole generation (no slight matter in the history of art) and is studied in connection with romantic realism instead of artists like Prud'hon, Gros, Ingres, Turner, and Blake, who were his true contemporaries.

Another older misconception has been imbedded in one of the thumbnail sketches which make Van Wyck Brooks's *Flowering of New England* such pleasant reading. The impression of Allston's life in Boston and Cambridgeport given by Brooks is derived from Henry James. It is, in brief, that, after his final return to America, Allston was crushed by the unsympathetic environment of New England and that "his mind rotted away" in the solitude of Cambridgeport, so that he was no longer able to produce. It is an impression based upon Allston's striking failure to finish his large picture of "Belshazzar's Feast." But it is not an adequate explanation, for Allston continued to paint, both in the 1820's in his Boston studio and in the 1830's in Cambridgeport, and produced all kinds of compositions, both large and small. His production did slacken in the last decade of his life, partly as the result of age and ill-health but also because his attention had turned inward toward the philosophic problem of art. The descriptions of his old age, upon which the impression of a decay of his creative faculty are based, are descriptions of an old man leading the life of a philosophic thinker more than that of a painter. He began to work on his theory of art sometime after 1830. In the winter of 1842-43 he read the five completed chapters aloud to his friends, Professors Felton and Longfellow of Harvard. These chapters were published posthumously in 1850 under the title, *Lectures on Art and Poems*, and one might say of them what Coleridge said of one of

his books that it was "a secret confided to the public which, to do the public justice, had been very well kept."

These lectures, the only book yet published on the subject by an American who possessed both a genuine philosophic culture and the experience of a first-rate artist, must be considered in their turn. It is enough to say here that they are hard reading, closely reasoned, and not the work of a man whose mind had "rotted away." These instances are given here only as illustrations of the fact that our contemporary opinion has drifted, in absence of sufficient information, into a very inaccurate conception of Allston's activity.

Allston was our first full-scale romantic artist. This in a sentence is his importance, for, in so being, he changed the character and enlarged the horizon of American art. Like most other romantic painters, he was uneven; but it was the unevenness of a pioneer. American painting had in him, for the first time, an artist who wished to explore the whole range of the art of painting—monumental painting (murals), narrative painting (the world of the inner life, or ideas, memories, thoughts, and dreams expressed in men's action), portrait painting (human character in its individual aspect), landscape and architecture (the world of nature about us and the setting man makes for himself), animals and still life (the individual details of nature, both animate and inanimate). No artist on this side of the Atlantic had before attempted to paint such a range of interests. His work and the influence of his life as an artist were felt throughout the imaginative being of this country in its first years of independent effort.

The sum of his work and that of his generation is this. With the opening of the nineteenth century, signs of a great alteration in the climate of the mind began to appear in America. It was the beginning of the change which turned the America of Benjamin Franklin and Jonathan Edwards into that of Emerson and Hawthorne. A new ideal appeared about the year 1800 in a few exceptional minds who were to lead the opening phase of the imaginative life of this new century. The great change in the dynamics of the imagination which took place throughout the Western world around the year 1800 we lightly call "roman-

ticism" and speak of it as if it were a single movement. It was, on the contrary, a most complex affair, as all great human things are. It was not only a great change but a great creative period, different in each country, in each decade, and in each artist. Nature was not the same thing for Wordsworth or Constable as it was for Rousseau or Corot. The *ideal* of Coleridge and Allston was not the same as the *beau idéal* of Paris and Italy. The problem of creation was different for the artist of 1800 from what it was to be for the artist of 1830.

American Colonial art had been strong but narrow. It was the art of a rational and utilitarian society, tempered by elegance. Its achievement was solid and was to prove enduring, but its sources of inspiration were few and its knowledge of the forms of art circumscribed. With Allston, American art reached out for a wider knowledge of artistic forms and fresh sources of feeling. The new artists looked both to the past and to the future. As men of the New World they faced confidently to the future, but they believed also that the best achievements of the Old World were their natural inheritance. Both their observation and their invention were stimulated by this double vision. They discovered new interests in nature and in human life, but the memory of the past also became a great source of inspiration. Painters attempted ideal or historical subjects. Religious, narrative, and monumental painting appeared where before had been only portraits, and with them came landscape, genre, still life, humor. Architects similarly used Roman, Greek, and Gothic memories to create new forms satisfying both for their rich associations of sentiment and for their novelty.

Allston's sensibility was complex and found expression in many forms. He was primarily a painter, but he also habitually used sculpture, keeping a tub of modeling clay in his studio and working out studies for his large compositions in clay as well as in outline and color. He wrote verse, prose tales, and a novel, imperfect in form but which had an influence in their time. As Southey said to William Collins, the painter, about Allston's early volume of poems: "Whatever defects some of them might have . . . they could not have proceeded from any but a poetic mind;

and Wordsworth who was present at the discussion, cordially agreed.”<sup>7</sup> Allston was also, like Coleridge, a famous conversationalist. “The vivacity of his conceptions, and the glowing language in which he could clothe them,” said Mrs. Jameson, “rendered his conversation inexpressibly delightful and exciting. I remember, after an evening spent with him, returning home very late (I think it was near three in the morning),—with the feelings of one ‘*who had been magnetized.*’”<sup>8</sup> The aphorisms which he jotted down on pieces of paper and fixed on the walls of his Cambridgeport studio are also memorable. Finally, there are his *Lectures on Art*, in which he stated in philosophical form the conceptions arrived at after forty years of study and practice of the fine arts. To estimate his significance, one must touch upon all these activities.

Allston in some respects resembles Hawthorne more than any other of the New England artists. He had the same independence and self-sufficiency, the same sense of the mysterious and the tragic. He had a silent, meditative mind. Memory and brooding reflection were his chief resources. “I cannot but think,” he said, “that the life of an artist, whether poet or painter, depends much on a happy youth; I do not mean as to outward circumstances, but as to his inward being; in my own case, at least, I feel the dependence; for I seldom step into the ideal world but I find myself going back to the age of first impressions. The germs of our best thoughts are certainly often to be found there; sometimes, indeed (though rarely) we find them in full flower, and when so, how beautiful to us these flowers seem through an atmosphere of thirty years.”<sup>9</sup> And again: “There is a period of life when the ocean of time seems to force upon the mind a barrier against itself, forming, as it were, a permanent beach, on which the advancing years successively break, only to be carried back by a returning current to that furthest deep whence they first flowed. Upon this beach the poetry of life may be said to have its birth; where the real ends and the ideal begins.”<sup>10</sup>

7. William Collins to Allston, November 4, 1818, in W. Wilkie Collins, *Memoirs of the Life of William Collins* (2 vols.; London, 1848), I, 193.

8. *Op. cit.*, p. 16.

9. William Dunlap, *A History of the Rise and Progress of the Arts of Design in the United States* (New York, 1834; reprinted, 3 vols.; Boston: Goodspeed, 1918), II, 158.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 156.



The "real" and the "ideal"—these words haunt the romantic world in all its changes. They indicate the belief in the human spirit and in thought and feeling as the distinctive factors of human experience that unites Allston with Channing and the Transcendentalists. To Allston's mind even the commonplaces of life partook in and were permeated by the inner life; therefore, "there can be but one rule by which to determine the proper rank of any object of pursuit, and that is by its nearer or more remote relation to our inward nature. Every system, therefore, which tends to degrade a mental pleasure to the subordinate or superfluous, is both narrow and false, as virtually reversing its natural order."<sup>11</sup> But the trait which sets Allston apart from the New England literary movement was his awareness of the mysterious and tragic limitations of human powers. Unlike Channing and Emerson with their boundless optimism, he believed that our powers are very limited in contrast with the vastness of the universe; that there is and must always be a realm of mystery beyond our knowledge, yet in this realm is to be found the supreme reality. The sense of mystery runs through all his art.

For who shall hope the mystery to scan  
Of that dark being symbolized in *Man*?

he wrote in his sonnet, "On a Word, Man." This was the theme of his dramatic early compositions, whose subjects lie upon the border line between human life and the supernatural or the divine. A dead man is laid in a cavern in which the prophet Elisha had been buried, and the lifeless body is revived by the touch of the ancient bones. Jacob dreams of a ladder filled with angels going up from earth and coming down from heaven. Macbeth and Banquo meet the witches upon the heath. These are subjects on the edge of human experience where the known meets the unknown. Allston was closer to the romanticism of Blake or to the German romantic idealists than to French romanticism.

The need for reverie felt by Allston and his contemporaries, the desire to surround life with images that would appeal to memory, may be shown by a minor illustration. Why do we sing in "America," the national hymn written when this period was ripe, of "thy woods and

11. *Lectures on Art and Poems* (New York, 1850), p. 9.

templed hills"? There were no temples on the forest-covered Appalachians or on the banks of the Ohio. It is not because our ancestors were ridiculous but because this imagery expressed for them a deep and widespread sentiment. Men felt a need to think of temples upon the wooded green hills of this country. Not fire towers, or gas stations with caged bears and soft drinks for sale, or billboards, or auto parkways, or summer hotels—but temples. They felt a necessity in their New World setting for thoughts of ancient, noble, and poetic things.

Nathaniel Hawthorne, as editor of the *American Magazine of Useful and Entertaining Knowledge*, wrote in 1836 a short essay to accompany an illustration of a shot tower standing near New York City. It was the kind of new, stark, and purely functional architecture which appeals greatly to modern taste. "This edifice was erected, some years ago," wrote Hawthorne, "and is situated on Manhattan Island, a few miles from the city of New York. It rises to the height of one hundred and fifty feet, and forms one of the most striking objects amid the picturesque and beautiful scenery with which it is surrounded. The East River, thronged with steam-boats and other vessels, flows at its base. The tower needs nothing but antiquity, and a mantle of clinging ivy, and, above all, the charm of legend and tradition, in order to afford as good a subject for the pen of the poet or novelist, as it does for the pencil of the artist. Or if it were (as might well beseem its stately height) the monument of a hero, or even a lighthouse, to guide benighted mariners to their haven, nothing would be easier than to surround it with romantic associations. But it is almost impossible to connect the sentiment of romance with a Shot Tower."<sup>12</sup>

12. Arlin Turner, *Hawthorne as Editor* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1941), pp. 172-73.

# Biographical Summary

## Allston's Life until Graduation from College, 1779-1800

*Washington Allston was born at Brook Green Domain on the Waccamaw River in All Saints Parish, District of Georgetown, South Carolina, November 5, 1779, and died at Cambridge Port (as it was then spelled), Massachusetts, on July 9, 1843.*

*His father, Captain William Allston, was descended from a John Allston, one of Monmouth's followers who escaped to this country about 1685. William Allston was an officer under Marion in the War for Independence. Returning home after the Battle of Cowpens in 1781, he died suddenly, supposedly poisoned by a servant. His mother, Rachel Moore, had both French and Dutch blood, having a Huguenot mother (Van der Horst) and grandmother (Villepontaux). She was William Allston's second wife. They were married on January 19, 1775, and had three children—Mary (1778), Washington (1779), and William Moore (1781). After William Allston's death, Rachel Allston married Dr. Henry Collins Flagg, chief of the medical staff of Greene's army; he was the son of a shipping merchant of Newport, Rhode Island.*

*Washington Allston was first educated at Mrs. Calcott's school in Charleston. He must therefore have left his birthplace on the Waccamaw at the age of five or six, if we may assume two years of schooling before he came north. In the spring of 1787 he was sent to Newport in charge of his maternal uncle, John Elias Moore, and in June of that year he was placed in the family of Robert Rogers to be prepared for college. In 1796 he entered Harvard College, graduating in 1800. In Cambridge he roomed for the first two years in the house of Dr. Waterhouse, the professor of medicine, on the north side of the Common, where he also*

## BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY

*boarded. For his last two years he roomed nearer the college in Mr. Sewall's house on the north side of the Boston Road (now Massachusetts Avenue) and boarded at Mr. Bartlett's on the same street.*

*He first met Malbone, the miniature painter; William Ellery Channing, the leader of the Unitarian movement; and Ann Channing, his first wife, at Newport. Among his intimates in college were Edmund T. Dana and Leonard Jarvis. The latter's reminiscences of Allston are among the Dana Papers in the Massachusetts Historical Society and are reprinted (not very accurately) by Flagg.*

*Allston graduated from Harvard with honors and was appointed poet of his class.*

## *Chapter Two*

### The Artist in America

LIFE in America, from the first settlement, presented to the practical mind the most magnificent opportunity that the heart could desire. A new continent was to be settled, a new world to be created, a new people to be fed and clothed and housed. But there were also those in this new world born with the contemplative faculty, whose field of activity is the life of the human spirit. For the practical minds life in America meant conquering the wilderness, founding cities, creating new forms of government, improving agriculture, establishing manufactures, defending the new state from its enemies, and inventing ways to improve communications over the immense distances of this continent and machines to simplify the labor of taming a wild land where the work was heavy and men were few. These are important forms of creation. But there are also men whose gift is to search for meanings and to express them in the various forms of philosophies and arts and sciences by which a people learns to understand itself. What did life mean in America for the contemplative spirit?

The task of painting in the United States has not been, as it was in the Middle Ages, to illustrate the traditional beliefs of the race or to represent the ideas and stories, legendary or historical, which even in the less compact baroque world existed concretely in the general imagination and with which the artist lived for the most part in instinctive sympathy. The beginnings of our art coincided with the liberation—or, some would say, the deprivation—of the artist from all such bonds. With the coming of the nineteenth century, the artist no longer owed a duty to

any person or authority, to any class of subject, to any rule or tradition of art. The task of painting became in our civilization to express, in its own terms and according to its own will, the meaning of experience for the artist.

In every period of art the artist's experience has been both of his own inner consciousness and of nature (which term I use, as the painter does, to mean not only the earth and the seasons but also all the world of other men outside our own consciousness). But the direction of attention, or talent, varies, and some artists are born to deal with the inner source, some to deal with nature. Without a doubt, the largest group of good painters in the United States has been those born to concern themselves more or less objectively with nature. The desire to observe and understand this vast continent and the life we live upon it—so wide, so diverse, in part so beautiful, in part so tragic or tawdry—has produced a body of excellent painting from Copley down. But what of the meditative and reflective minds? This part of our aesthetic achievement (as far as its early period is concerned) is so out of fashion that even its existence is at the present time largely ignored. Two popular and widely spread fallacies have played a part in bringing about this state of opinion. They are what I would call the *frontier fallacy* and the *geographical fallacy*.

The spectacle of the frontier has impressed itself deeply upon the imagination and the taste of this century, as the frontier itself has receded into the past. The notion of the American as a rough frontiersman with a heart of gold always flourished abroad. The success of figures like Chester Harding and Bret Harte in England is symptomatic of a search for the picturesque which picked out the frontier type as the only one conforming to the European romantic conception of what an American ought to be. But at the present time it flourishes equally well at home. Like most vigorous fallacies, it is actually a half-truth. As Whitehead observed, the great enemy of thought is overstatement: one makes a useful generalization but overestimates its success. The recognition of the frontier as an important element in our civilization has become a tendency to explain everything by it. But the life of a nation is necessarily much more complex than this, and civilization has many roots, not one.

The predominance of the frontier fallacy at the present time, which has persuaded so many people that only the naïve, the regional, and the folk artists—or in literature that only Mark Twain and Whitman—are truly American artists, or that, by rejecting this or that aspect of art in America, one can arrive at something that is purely “American,” is only another example (of which we have already too many) of how the twentieth century has misread the meaning of its own civilization.

This misunderstanding has been aided by the geographical fallacy that was at once the weakest and the most influential element in Emerson’s ideas about art. This was his supposition that, because the United States was then a vast, formless, and half-wild continent, the true American art when it arrived would likewise be gigantic, rugged, and grand. Emerson thought that the American art he found existing in his own day—a delicate, tender, and introspective art—was hardly to be considered American. It was out of scale with America; it lacked “nerve and dagger.”<sup>1</sup> His error lay in assuming that, because greatness took one form in the scenery of this continent, it must take the same form in men’s lives. One can agree with his desire that our life should achieve spiritual grandeur without falling into the mistake of supposing that greatness takes the same form in the inner life and in nature. There is nothing in the history of art to support the idea of an automatic similarity between the height of mountains or the width of plains and the imaginative life of the men who live upon them. How many different kinds of art have come and gone, for instance, on the same little spot of European soil, as the spirit of man changed with the centuries within the same setting of river, valley, and hills. And the art of Asia was not formed by its vast mountain chains and bare plains but by the silent introspection of Buddhist mysticism. The earth is to the artist a setting, an inspiration, and a problem, but what he may create cannot be predicted from the physical appearance of his surroundings.

What has been forgotten is that, if America was settled by adventurers and men of action whose struggle with the soil and adaptation

1. In his *Journals*, May 26, 1839: “Allston’s pictures are Elysian; fair, serene, but unreal. I extend the remark to all the American geniuses. Irving, Bryant, Greenough, Everett, Channing, even Webster in his recorded Eloquence, all lack nerve and dagger.”

to unfamiliar conditions brought out new qualities of life, it was also settled by religious and intellectual dissenters who came here to withdraw from the world into the wilderness in order to seek for the life of the spirit. Quakers, Puritans, Catholics, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Baptists—they came because of a spiritual crisis in the life of the seventeenth century. They were led by scholarly men like Winthrop in Massachusetts and William Penn's friend, James Logan, in Philadelphia. Let me quote John Fiske's description of Logan, whose name became one which so many Indian warriors were proud to adopt:

"James Logan was an infant prodigy; at the age of twelve his attainments in Greek, Latin, and Hebrew had attracted much notice, and he afterward attained distinction in modern languages, mathematics, physics and natural history. Penn brought him to Philadelphia on his second coming, in 1699, and for the next forty years he was always in some high position,—secretary of the province, member of the council, judge of common pleas, chief justice, mayor of Philadelphia, and, in 1736-38, acting-governor of Pennsylvania. Like his friend Penn, he knew how to win and keep the confidence of the red men, and it was in honor of him that the chieftain Tagahjute received the name of Logan, long to be remembered for the tale of woe which cast such unjust aspersions on the fame of Captain Michael Cresap. The singular variety of his genius is shown by the fact that his friend Linnaeus, in compliment to his botanical attainments, named after him a natural order of herbs and shrubs, the *Loganiaceae*, containing some thirty genera in three hundred and fifty species, of which *strychnos nux vomica* is one of the best known. He published Latin essays on reproduction in plants, and on the aberration of light; translated Cato's *Disticha* and Cicero's *De Senectute*, and bequeathed to the city his library of two thousand volumes, comprising all the Latin classics, and more than a hundred folios in Greek with the original edition of Ptolemy's *Almagest* and Timon's commentary, 'from my learned friend Fabricius, who published fourteen volumes of his *Bibliotheca Graeca* in quarto, in which, after he had finished his account of Ptolemy, on my inquiring from him at Hamburg how I should find it, having long sought for it in vain in England, he sent it to



me out of his own library, telling me it was so scarce that neither price nor prayers could purchase it.' ”<sup>2</sup>

For such men as these, the fact that they found themselves living in log cabins in the forest was an accident of circumstances. It was their noble ambition *inter silvas quaerere verum*, as Thomas Wharton said of the Quakers in Pennsylvania; while the forest trees still stood at their doors, they began to build schools and to set up printing presses, to teach and be enlightened.<sup>3</sup> The struggle to live on a strange soil was subsidiary for them to the greater struggle within the human heart, which is outside of place or circumstance. Perhaps a third of our population is descended from such settlers. These frontiersmen by force of circumstances might be farmers or mechanics for generations while living in the wild regions of a new world, but the deep inner tendency toward the life of thought remained. When, generations after, one of their descendents closed the record of a seeking spirit with the following, he merely put into words the spirit of his line:

“Who knows what beautiful and winged life, whose egg has been buried for ages under many concentric layers of woodenness in the dead dry life of society . . . may unexpectedly come forth from amidst society’s most trivial and handselled furniture to enjoy its perfect summer life at last! I do not say that John or Jonathan will realize all this; but such is the character of that morrow which mere lapse of time can never make to dawn. The light which puts out our eyes is darkness to us. Only that day dawns to which we are awake. There is more day to dawn. The sun is but a morning star.”<sup>4</sup>

Hence there is a dreaming, brooding spirit which runs throughout American art and which is characteristic of it wherever it is most profound, even in the work of objective realists like Eakins or Winslow Homer. And, beyond this, the relation of the human spirit to its environment is not mechanical and obvious as the geographical fallacy would

2. John Fiske, *The Dutch and Quaker Colonies in America* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1899), II, 317–18.

3. Thomas I. Wharton, “Notes on the Provincial Literature of Pennsylvania,” *Memoirs of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania*, I (1826), 101.

4. Henry David Thoreau, *Walden* (1854).

make it. The artist, who is profoundly sensitive to his environment, feels keenly any lack of balance or harmony in his spiritual world. Because he is creative rather than a mere passive creature of his environment, his reaction to a want is to create what his heart craves. The very fact that the American artist has lived in an unfinished world, somewhat disorderly by reason of the bricks and timbers scattered about during the building of a new society, is one reason why his art has so often been delicate and quiet, dreamy and tender. It is his way of creating the harmony, order, and inner tranquillity that his spirit needs.

De Tocqueville discovered this contrast between nature and man when he visited the frontier settlements in Michigan during the 1830's. It was a great surprise to him and contrary to all his ideas that he nowhere found American "peasants."

"Immense forests shadowed the shore of Lake Erie and made about the lake a thick and rarely broken belt. From time to time, however, the aspect of the country suddenly changes. On turning a wood one sights the elegant spire of a steeple, some houses shining white and neat, some shops. Two paces further on, the forest, primitive and apparently impenetrable, resumes its sway and once more reflects its foliage in the waters of the lake. . . . Those who inhabit these isolated places have arrived there since yesterday; they have come with the customs, the ideas, the needs of civilization. They only yield to savagery that which the imperious necessity of things exacts from them; thence the most bizarre contrasts. Without transition you pass from a wilderness into the streets of a city, from the wildest scenes to the most smiling pictures of civilized life. If, night coming on you unawares, you are not forced to take shelter at the foot of a tree, you have every prospect of arriving in a village where you will find everything, even to French fashions, the almanac of modes, the caricatures of the boulevards. The merchant of Buffalo and of Detroit is as well stocked with them as he of New York. The factories of Lyon work for one as for the other. You quit the large roads, you penetrate paths scarcely cleared, you finally perceive a cleared field, a cabin composed of half-squared logs, into which daylight enters only through one narrow window, you believe yourself at last come to the dwelling of

an American peasant: *erreur*. You enter this cabin which seems the asylum of all the miseries, but the owner wears the same clothes as you, he speaks the language of the cities. On his rude table are books and newspapers; he himself hastens to take you aside to learn just what is going on in old Europe and to ask you what has most struck you in his own country. He will trace out for you on paper a plan of campaign for the Belgians, and will gravely inform you what remains to be done for the prosperity of France. One would believe oneself seeing a rich proprietor who has momentarily come to live for several nights in his hunting lodge. And in fact the wood cabin is only a temporary refuge for the American, a temporary concession made to the exigencies of the situation. When the surrounding fields are all under cultivation and the new proprietor has the time to concern himself with the comforts of life, a house more spacious and better adapted to his needs will replace the log house, and will serve to shelter numerous children who will also one day go to create for themselves a dwelling in the wilderness."<sup>5</sup>

In the life of the settlers in America we have to deal not with what ethnologists call a "culture," that is, simply a complex of habits, of any sort, on any level, whatever they may happen to be. We are dealing with a civilization, which means a life governed by the moral aspirations and cultural standards of the *civis*, the citizen of a city-state. "Civilization" is a word which appeared in the eighteenth century and displaced an older word, "civility." But both have at their root the conception of the man who aspires toward the developed and self-disciplined life of the *civis*, the ideal which separated the inhabitants of the Greek city-states from the barbarous world around them. In the American frontier Abraham Lincoln was an example of the grandeur and force of this moral aspiration, which no hardship, or wild surroundings, or loneliness, or lack of outward encouragement could kill. It was in the stock.

Later writers have made much of the bareness of the New England environment in which Allston's mature life was passed. They have

5. George Wilson Pierson, *Tocqueville and Beaumont in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1938). The passage quoted is from De Tocqueville's remarkable essay, "Quinze jours en desert," written on the steamboat "Superior" in August, 1831, immediately after his experiences on the frontier.

found ammunition even in Emerson, who in the heat of his early revolt sometimes spoke as if the New England of the generation preceding had been a desert. Poor and barren it was, according to twentieth-century notions; but it was a desert from which sprang remarkable flowers of intellect and character. Its inner illumination was rooted in granite and remained too close to its source to be spoiled by self-pity. Julian Hawthorne described it, some sixty years ago, in words which may be placed beside all that we know of its defects. The New England of the opening of the nineteenth century was, he said, "a remarkable and perhaps unique state of society. Plain living and high thinking can seldom have been more fully united and exemplified than in certain circles of Boston and Salem during the first thirty or forty years of this century. The seed of democracy was bearing its first and (so far) its sweetest and most delicate fruit. Men and women of high refinement, education and sensibilities thought it no derogation, not only to work for their living, but to tend a counter, sweep a room, or labor in the field. Religious feeling was deep and earnest, owing in part to the recent schism between the severe and liberal interpretations of Christian destiny and obligations; and the development of commerce and other material interest had not more than foreshadowed its present proportions, nor distracted people's attention from less practical matters."<sup>6</sup>

Allston had a healthy delight in the sweetness of life which saved him from the utopianisms and fanaticisms that plagued the Transcendental generation. He loved good food and liked to talk in later years of long-past dinners in Paris. Even during his solitary days in the 1820's, when he was financially at his lowest ebb, he ate his dinners at Rouillard's French restaurant, at the corner of Milk and Congress streets, which served the best food in Boston. He had the artist's ability to savor the passing moment which makes any spot a place to work and without which, I think, a man cannot be an artist in any environment. There is another trait of Allston's mind whose importance cannot, I believe, be overestimated. The quality of reverence was very highly developed in him. Washington Irving noted how strongly this quality showed itself

6. Julian Hawthorne, *Nathaniel Hawthorne and His Wife* (2 vols.; Boston, 1885), I, 43-44.

among the works of art at Rome. Reverence is a quality that opens the mind to sympathy with other minds; it enables a man to apprehend that which is above his experience. It draws him toward what has been achieved upon the highest plane and, by opening his comprehension to what is above less finely organized minds, enlarges and ripens his power of discrimination. A sensibility thus developed will make more out of a slight impression than an insensitive mind can draw from the greatest opportunities. It contributed perhaps more than we can measure to the rapidity and sureness of Allston's development. The preoccupation with the inward life and the sentiment of reverence, more than anything else, identify him with the peculiar trend of American thought at this time and formed perhaps his best preparation for life.

In every period of art in the Western world one finds the record of both outer and inner inspirations—nature and the inner life. At no period since 1800 has our art been without both. It is a serious error, therefore, to ignore the current of idealism in our art. Even if this had been the complete failure which it is the fashion to consider it, we should still have to ask ourselves why it failed—why the spirit of Western civilization, product of centuries of extraordinary life, singularly equipped both for practical life and for introspection, has shriveled to a narrower compass in the New World. It did not so shrivel, but it had to meet difficulties which the contemplative life had not faced for a thousand years past in Europe.

There were perhaps some advantages in the poverty of the environment. The artist of the early nineteenth century had to face obstacles in his daily work, in the exhibition of his pictures, and in his study which no one has to face today. In large measure he lacked our conveniences and comforts also. But he lived in a world built by sound and disciplined craftsmanship, instead of in surroundings composed of the quick, clever, but transitory effects of today. There were fewer painters then in America but more skilled craftsmen, fewer exhibitions of pictures but also less trash to distract the attention, fewer amusements but stronger beliefs. For the clever, imitative talents in which the twentieth century is so rich, there was no nourishment. But for the man of deep imagination

and inner force a Spartan simplicity offers a livable if not flattering environment.

Painting in America, after a long, slow apprenticeship, became in the early nineteenth century an instrument of the reflective and imaginative life. Allston is the chief figure in that enlargement of its imaginative scope. He has for us the interest of a pioneer. His work forms the first monument in the art of painting erected by the contemplative spirit upon our soil. He introduced into the tradition of our art the strains of dramatic and lyric sentiment, of quiet reverie and of meditation upon the past, which have produced so much of the greatest art in other lands. These traits are part of the spirit of mankind. It was inevitable that, when the time was ripe, they should make themselves felt here.

It is enough to ask ourselves what the problems of the first artist of this kind in the United States were to see the interest of such a figure. Romantic artists in Europe found the contemporary world barren; but they at least were surrounded by the accumulated riches of all the past, which forms in its totality an enormous record of minds brooding upon the heroic and the unseen. Europe was studded with towers of cathedrals which were the monuments of past generations' meditation upon the divine; with ruins in which the great memories of the race were embodied; with ancient universities and libraries and galleries of art in which the importance of the inner life had been given expression. Even in a dry and unsympathetic period the artist had the presence of the past to sustain his conception of life and to give prestige to the way he wished to live. No one can know even a little of that age without understanding what part these silent companions played in nourishing its artists. But in America, in 1800, when Allston graduated from college and set out to be an artist, there were neither cathedrals, ruins, libraries, nor pictures. All was still to rise from the soil. The winds blew fresh from the forest and from the salt Atlantic over a brisk and snappy democracy, where every man had his living to get and where everyone was as good as his neighbor. How did it go with such a man in such a place?

If we balance success against failure, our answer must be the fact that

the generation of artists who came after him felt that someone before them had found the way. When Margaret Fuller reviewed the Allston exhibit of 1839 in the first number of the *Dial*, she spoke of the impression made upon her when she first saw some of Allston's pictures at the age of sixteen. "The calm and meditative ease of these pictures, the ideal beauty that shone *through* rather than *in* them, and the harmony of coloring were as unlike anything else I saw, as the Vicar of Wakefield to Cooper's novels. I seemed to recognise in painting that self-possessed elegance, that transparent depth, which I most admired in literature; I thought with delight that such a man as this had been able to grow up in our bustling, reasonable community, that he had kept his foot upon the ground, yet never lost sight of the rose-clouds of beauty floating above him. I saw, too, that he had not been troubled, but possessed his own soul with the blandest patience; and I hoped, I scarce know what, probably the *mot d'enigme* for which we are all looking. How the poetical mind can live and work in peace and good faith! how it may unfold to its due perfection in an unpoetical society!"

It was the influence of this fact—that Allston had succeeded in living the life of an artist in America, remaining upon the highest plane of artistic purpose and using always his best powers without falling into commercialization or hack work—that permeated the life of this country in the early nineteenth century. It was felt by those who scarcely knew him; by many who had never even seen his work but nevertheless felt his presence. After his death William Cullen Bryant wrote from New York to Richard Henry Dana: "Weir, who has just put the last hand to his picture of the 'Embarkation of the Pilgrims,' [commissioned for the Capitol in Washington] on which he has earnestly been engaged for years, is a man of great simplicity of character and depth of feeling. 'It was encouragement to me during my long labors,' said he to me, last week, 'that when they should be finished, Allston would see what I had done. I thought of it almost every day while I was at work.' Such was the confidence with which the artists looked up to his true and friendly judgment, and so sure were they that what they had done well could

give him pleasure.”<sup>7</sup> The impression he made is also in the words Emerson wrote at the time of Allston’s death to Margaret Fuller, who was traveling on the western prairies. “And now you have already learned that Allston is dead,—the solitary link as it seemed between America and Italy. Not strange that he should die, but that he should have lived sixty-four years. I never heard of his being young, or a beginner, and suppose that his first strokes were masterly. He was like one of those boulders which geologists sometimes find a thousand or two miles from the mountain from which they were detached, and science cannot show how they were conveyed. A little sunshine of his own has this man of Beauty made in the American forest, and who has not heard of his veiled picture, which now alas must be unveiled.”<sup>8</sup>

7. Quoted by Jared B. Flagg, *Washington Allston, Life and Letters* (New York, 1892), p. 371.

8. Emerson to Margaret Fuller, July 11, 1843 (*Letters of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, ed. Ralph L. Rusk [6 vols.; New York: Columbia University Press, 1939], III, 182).



## Biographical Summary

### Formative Years as an Artist in Newport, Charleston London, Paris, Rome, 1800–1808

1800. *Allston went to Newport immediately after leaving college. He left Newport in December for Charleston, South Carolina. There he secured the consent of his family and sold his share of the family property to finance his study of art abroad. In Charleston he found Malbone and Charles Fraser, another excellent miniaturist, at work.*
1801. *In May he and Malbone sailed together for England, arriving in London about the middle of June. Allston was admitted to the school of the Royal Academy in September.*
1802. *He exhibited three pictures at the British Institution, Somerset House, his first public exhibition.*
1803. *A letter to his uncle, Van der Horst, at Bristol, October 3 of this year, gives Allston's address as 51 Upper Titchfield Street, Marylebone, London, but says that he is leaving London the following Saturday. In November he arrived with John Vanderlyn at Paris, via Holland and Belgium.*
1804. *Probably in the late spring, Allston started alone for Italy. He traveled through Switzerland, via Lucerne and the St. Gotthard to Bellinzona.*
- 1804–8. *Allston was in Italy, chiefly in Rome. He stopped first at Siena to learn the language and was at Rome in November, 1804. Flagg's account of his Italian years is confused; he says that Allston visited Venice and spent a year in Florence before going to Rome, which is impossible. Allston was certainly in Rome most*

## BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY

*of the time during Coleridge's stay from December 31, 1805, to June 22, 1806. He met Coleridge shortly after the poet's arrival in Rome. Washington Irving came to Rome on March 27, 1805, and was an intimate friend and companion until his departure a few weeks later on April 14. Vanderlyn also came to Rome in the latter part of 1805. A careless interpretation of a remark by Vanderlyn (quoted by Sweetser) has given rise to a surprising list of famous people whom, it is sometimes said, Allston met at the Cafe Greco in Rome, including Turner, Fenimore Cooper, Byron, Keats, Shelley, Flaxman, Gibson, Cornelius, and Hans Christian Andersen. All these men no doubt visited the Cafe Greco, but they did so after Allston had left Rome. He did know the neoclassic sculptors, Canova and Thorwaldsen, and the German painter, Gottlieb Schick (see p. 58), whom he taught how to use glazes. Allston visited Florence perhaps in 1807, but I can find no evidence of a visit to Venice, which is first mentioned in Flagg's biography, published in 1892. The "Casket Scene," now owned by the Boston Athenaeum, was left to this institution in 1877 by the will of John E. Allston as having been painted at Florence in 1807. Allston's letter to James McMurtie of March 2, 1837 (Historical Society of Pennsylvania), speaks of the Medici tombs by Michelangelo in S. Lorenzo, Florence, but does not mention when he visited them.*

1808. *On April 24 he sailed for Leghorn. "It is past midnight," he closed his letter to Vanderlyn, "and I sail tomorrow for New York." The date of his arrival in Boston is given by Flagg as 1809, and he implies, if he does not directly say, that Allston stopped for a time in England on his way to America. But the Jarvis notes from the Dana Papers say (sheet 3): "I lost sight of my friend till he returned to this country in 1808." There seems to be rather stronger evidence for his return in 1808 than in 1809.*

## Chapter Three

### The Education of a Painter

ALLSTON wrote to William Dunlap when the latter was collecting materials for his *History*: "Though I have never had any regular instructor in the art (a circumstance I would here observe both idle and absurd to boast of,) I had much incidental instruction; which I have always through life been glad to receive from every one in advance of myself. And, I may add, there is no such thing as a self-taught artist in the ignorant acceptance of the word; for the greatest genius that ever lived must be indebted to others, if not by direct teaching, yet indirectly through their works."<sup>1</sup>

To be a painter, one must learn to use a difficult and complicated medium so easily that it becomes instinctive. The American painter of today complains of the difficulty of his profession because so few people buy his works. But for the painter of 1800 the difficulty was not only that there were few buyers for his pictures; there was also no place where he could learn to paint them. There were no art schools, and painting could hardly be said to exist as an established profession. In an old and settled society the arts form professions which, even if practiced by men of little talent, are at least present, so that their skills can be learned by the student. In eighteenth-century America (and in the frontier portions of the country down into the present century) only the easily portable arts—literature and music—were carried along by the spreading population; painting was established much later, and sculpture last of all. There were few painters then in the United States and almost no examples of the great painting of the past to give an art student perspec-

1. William Dunlap, *A History of the Rise and Progress of the Arts of Design*, II, 154.

tive and introduce him to the range and splendor of his medium. In 1800 there was probably not a single great work by a great artist of the past in the United States.<sup>2</sup> Yet Allston as an undergraduate at Harvard painted a picture which he later exhibited at the British Institution in London in 1802. A generation earlier John Singleton Copley, at the age of seventeen, had sent a portrait of his half-brother to the Royal Academy and had it accepted and praised. How did these painters learn their craft? This is a question which must occur constantly to one who studies the artists of these times. How did the artist of those days who was born where no profession of art existed discover his vocation and receive his training?

A certain number of individuals out of any population are born with the unusually perceptive sense of sight or touch and the unusually gifted hands which form the natural endowment of a painter or sculptor or craftsman. A much smaller number are born with the particular imaginative character of mind (which is far more rare than the modern world supposes) that requires outlet in the figurative or representative languages of painting or sculpture; those whose gifts require the expression of a craftsman are much more numerous. The story of the arts in America shows that individuals born with these talents, even though little notion of art and none of its technical skills are present in the world about them, turn instinctively to the arts as their natural language.

There are some verses by Allston suggested by the recollection of a little bird carved, when he was six years old, out of a green stalk of Indian corn as a parting gift to his sister. He wrote to Dunlap:

"To go back as far as I can—I remember that I used to draw before I left Carolina, at six years of age (by the way no *uncommon* thing), and still earlier, that my favorite amusement, much akin to it, was making little landscapes about the roots of an old tree in the country—meagre enough, no doubt; the only particulars of which I can call to mind, were a cottage built of sticks, shaded by little trees, which were composed of the small suckers, (I think so called) resembling miniature

2. There were, of course, a few good old pictures. I know of two small landscapes by Ruisdael which were brought here by one family in 1798. But I know of no *great* old painting in this country at that time.

trees, which I gathered in the woods. Another employment was the converting the forked stalks of the wild ferns into little men and women, by winding about them different colored yarn. These were sometimes presented with pitchers made of the pomegranate flower. These childish fancies were straws by which, perhaps, an observer might have guessed which way the current was setting for after life. And yet, after all, this love of imitation may be common to childhood. General imitation certainly is: but whether adherence to particular kinds may not indicate a permanent propensity, I leave to those who have studied the subject more than I have, to decide.

“But even these delights would sometimes give way to a stronger love for the wild and marvellous. I delighted in being terrified by the tales of witches and hags, which the negroes used to tell me; and I well remember with how much pleasure I recalled these feelings on my return to Carolina; especially on revisiting a gigantic wild grape-vine in the woods, which had been the favorite swing for one of these witches.”<sup>3</sup>

Allston's family were South Carolina planters. His father, an officer in the Revolutionary army, died when he was a baby. His mother then cut herself off from her people by marrying (as they thought beneath her) a New England doctor, Henry Collins Flagg, who had come south as chief of the medical staff of Greene's army. The boy Washington spent little time in the South. At the age of eight he was sent north to be educated for college, and he returned to South Carolina only for a few months in 1800-1801 in order to sell his inheritance before going to Europe. The most important traits he derived from his South Carolina environment seem to have been a love of the magical acquired from the Negroes' ghost stories, a southern charm of manner, and the personal pride of a southerner of good family. But before he attended boarding school his instinct had already found engravings to copy (the chief source of the eighteenth-century American's conception of European

3. Dunlap, *op. cit.*, pp. 152-53. According to Jared B. Flagg (*Washington Allston, Life and Letters*), Allston also learned while at school in Carolina to prepare oil colors and had attempted his first landscape of the eruption of Vesuvius; but Flagg is here mistaken. The events he describes happened during the last year of Allston's schooling (1796), at Newport.

art), and he had shown a childish bent for drawing all sorts of figures, landscapes, and animals.

From June, 1787, until he entered Harvard College in 1796, Allston attended the private school conducted by Robert Rogers at Newport, Rhode Island, where he met William Ellery Channing<sup>4</sup> and his sister, Ann Channing, and also his first professional painters. He saw a few portraits in Newport at the shop of Samuel King, who made quadrants and compasses and occasionally painted pictures.<sup>5</sup> During his last year in school (1795-96) he began the use of oil paints. At Newport he met the precociously talented Edward Greene Malbone, two years his senior and already a capable miniature painter. Malbone was at work in Boston when Allston moved to Cambridge, and his strong and graceful art inspired Allston likewise to attempt miniatures during his first year at college. "Without success. I could make *no hand of it*, all my attempts in that line being so far inferior to what I could *then* do in oil, that I became disgusted with my abortive efforts, and gave it up."<sup>6</sup> A miniature portrait in the Boston Museum of John Harris, who was in the class ahead of Allston, is perhaps the only unquestionable example of Allston's miniature painting. It is a little crude but has a breadth of style and poetic feeling notable in a miniature. But Allston was not happy working on this scale. The bulk of his early portraits are life-size heads in pastel or in oil. He did a good deal of painting in college and also wrote quantities of verse with a fluent, if untrained, gift for words.

His earliest existing works are a lively series of satirical drawings, "The Buck's Progress," a spirited attempt in the vein of Hogarth (Pl. II). They are the most successful of all his satires, for it is a mood in which undergraduates excel. These satirical drawings have an undergraduate's high spirits and lively sense of mockery. But they also possess an advantage of medium over Allston's later humorous oils, for humor is

4. Channing's reminiscences of this school are to be found in Elizabeth Palmer Peabody, *Reminiscences of Reverend William Ellery Channing, D.D.* (Boston, 1880), pp. 61, 82-83.

5. Frank W. Bayley (*Little Known Early American Portrait Painters, No. 3: Samuel King*) states that Allston was a pupil of King. Allston's own statements in his letters to Dunlap show that the relationship was not so formal as the word "pupil" implies.

6. Dunlap, *op. cit.*, p. 155.

more at home in the graphic arts than in more pretentious media. They are executed in the mixture of pen and water-color wash that Rowlandson was using at this time in England and are entertaining drawings.

"My leisure hours at college," he wrote to Dunlap, "were chiefly devoted to the pencil, to the composition equally of figures and landscapes; I do not remember that I preferred one to the other. . . . There was an old landscape at the house of a friend in Cambridge (whether Italian or Spanish I know not) that gave me my first hints in color in that branch; it was of a deep and rich tone, though not by the hand of a master; the work, perhaps, of a moderate artist, but one who lived in a *good age*, when he could not help catching something of the good that was abroad. In the coloring of figures, the works of Pine in the Columbian Museum, in Boston, were my first masters. Pine had certainly, as far as I can recollect, considerable merit in color. But I had a higher master in the head of Cardinal Bentivoglio, from Vandyke [*sic*], in the college library, which I obtained permission to copy one winter vacation. This copy of Vandyke was by Smybert [*sic*], an English painter, who came to this country with Dean, afterwards Bishop, Berkeley. At that time it seemed to me perfection; but when I saw the original some years afterward, I found I had to alter my notions of perfection. However, I am grateful to Smybert for the instruction he gave me—his work rather. Deliver me from kicking down even the weakest step of an early ladder."<sup>7</sup>

This copy of Van Dyck by Smibert helped form the conception of painting of a series of students in Boston who, without masters or models, seized upon anything they could find to show them what the art of painting was. Copley studied it when he inherited Smibert's painting room. It was Trumbull's chief instructor when he left the Revolutionary army and shut himself in Copley's deserted studio in order to teach himself to paint; and it left indelible traces upon his conception of the portrait.<sup>8</sup> Still later Allston studied it. As the "Family Group of

7. *Ibid.*, pp. 155-56.

8. See the writer's article, "A Portrait of John Trumbull, the Poet," *Art Quarterly*, I (1938), 212-25. Trumbull's copy is now in the possession of Harvard University (cf. Alan Burroughs, *Harvard Portraits* [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1936], p. 19).

Bishop Berkeley" shows, Smibert was, in his early years, an excellent colorist, and this copy was probably of good quality. It served at least to instil into the minds of these young students the baroque conception of the portrait, with its mingled ardor and objectivity, reality and grandeur. Its loftiness of style was beyond these self-taught young Americans, but its vividness of characterization and expression may be one of the sources of a directness and intensity in their work that is in marked contrast to the idealizing and decorative trend of English portrait painting. The Van Dyck also trained all these young painters to look to the old masters for guidance. After he went abroad, Allston did not imitate his English contemporaries but sought directly the sources of their art in the seventeenth century.

On the other hand, the influence of the mild English rococo decorative type of portrait practiced by men like Pine is perhaps to be discerned in the unfinished "Self Portrait" of Allston as an undergraduate (Dana Collection, Cambridge). The canvas evidently did not interest the artist, for it was left unfinished.

Allston's first conception of landscape was also formed by baroque examples. Two of his earliest landscapes exist, done while he was an undergraduate, both dated 1798. One is in the collection of the Countess Laslo Szechenyi, the other in the Boston Athenaeum. These are probably the same two youthful landscapes of 1798 included in his retrospective exhibition of 1839 with the note, "These youthful efforts are exhibited as objects of curiosity." The artist's modest opinion is justified, but the direction of thought revealed in these pictures is interesting. They show that Allston as a youth of nineteen had already grasped the baroque landscape principle of transposing nature into the plane of art and distilling it into a harmony of light, space, and tone. The significance of this discovery can be appreciated by comparing these two little pictures with Ralph Earl's well-known "View of Worcester from the Leicester Hills," painted in 1800 by an artist who had the benefit of several years' study in London. Earl's landscape has the interest of a document. But it is a completely bald description of the view from the house of Colonel



Denny, who commissioned the picture—a view which the artist observed with only a modicum of attention. The sky is a conventional white and pink, the earth brown, the framing trees are “pitch forks crowned with straw” (to use a phrase from Allston’s poem “The Two Painters”), and that is as far as Earl’s observation carried him. The aesthetic conception of a landscape—a harmony of space, light, color, aerial tone, expressing an aspect of the life of nature—is hardly discernible enough to make the observer feel sure it ever existed in the artist’s mind.

Earl’s “View of Worcester” is an early example of the topographic view, a type of landscape which flourished in this country from 1795 onward and from which were to develop the early landscape painters of romantic realism like Birch, Doughty, Durand, and Alvin Fisher. The topographic view might have excellent landscape qualities of space, air, and light; but it was essentially a portrait of a specific spot. Gradually, as a romantic love of nature for its own sake made itself felt in the second and third decades of the nineteenth century, the romantic realists transformed these simple topographic views from bald reporting of facts to a poetic communion with nature.

Allston, on the other hand, began with the conscious harmonies of art and developed toward a deep understanding of the moods of nature. The best of his early landscapes which illustrate his point of departure in this development is the small landscape in the Wayside Museums at Harvard, Massachusetts, the so-called “Landscape with Aeneas and Achates.” It is a sensitive and effective study in aerial tone: the red and brown of earth leading the eye into the cool blue distance. The hills and sea are from a world of fantasy; the figures are clad in an indeterminate costume, neither ancient nor modern but derived from Italian landscapes. This canvas illustrates his first youthful aim—to achieve a tonal style of painting. Within a few years he was to acquire the deep and lasting impressions of nature which were to give life and meaning to this style.

But painting is a handicraft as well as an art, and a handicraft is learned from the men who are practicing it. Up to the time of his graduation

## THE EDUCATION OF A PAINTER

from college Allston was practically self-taught. It was necessary for him to plunge into the life of the studios, where the skills of painting live and where the newcomer can absorb through the pores of his being the methods of the skilled hand putting paint upon canvas according to the ancient knowledge of a craft whose origins stretch back beyond the beginnings of history. To an American of 1800 the natural place to go for this was London.

## *Chapter Four*

### The Horizon of 1800

ALLSTON graduated from Harvard College in 1800 at the age of twenty-one. A miniature by Malbone shows him as he was at that time—a handsome, thoughtful young man with large dark eyes in a pale face and dark curly hair worn rather long after the fashion of the times. “My acquaintance with Allston,” wrote his classmate Leonard Jarvis, “began with our college life in August 1796. It was reported that two South Carolinians had joined our class and some curiosity was excited as to what manner of men they might be. It was at once seen that they had less of the school boy or raw student about them and that they were dressed in more fashionable style than the rest of us. One of the two was the late Colonel Wainwright of the Marine Corps, who at that time was remarkably handsome and of a haughty and assured bearing; the other was Allston, who was distinguished by the grace of his movements and his gentlemanly deportment. His countenance, once seen, could never be forgotten. His smooth, high, open forehead surrounded by a profusion of dark wavy hair, his delicately formed nose, his peculiarly expressive mouth, his large, lustrous, melting eye which varied with every emotion and his complexion of the most beautiful Italian cast, smooth and colorless yet healthy, all blending harmoniously formed a face which was irresistibly attractive and which united with his gentle unassuming manners secured him the goodwill of all his classmates. Those who hated one another most heartily, and there were good haters in our class, and who agreed in nothing else united in respectful and kindly feelings towards him.”<sup>1</sup> The eighteenth-century American col-

1. Leonard Jarvis' notes on Allston, Dana Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society.

lege student was not wholly crushed by seriousness. Allston seems to have had his share in a good deal of cheerfulness during his four years at Cambridge. There are a number of comic drawings done by him in college, and some convivial verses as well as drawings are in the records of the Hasty Pudding Society. He had also the reputation of being fond of company and a good dancer. Gifted with a natural charm of manners, a lively pleasure in living, a good mind, a marked gift for art, and a talent for writing fluent and lively verses, he had made an impression in Cambridge, and many of his college friendships were to last through life. When he returned to Boston from Rome nine years later, Miss Lowell described him as reserved and not very communicative in general company, saving his best powers for his work.<sup>2</sup> But his reserve never interfered with his affability or his popularity.

Let us, however, before going further, ask ourselves a question. What was it like to be twenty-one in the year 1800, in the United States of America, and with a burning ambition to become an artist? The most important thing to ask about any artist is always: How did the world appear to him as he began his career? We look back on the artists of the past and see their lives as a finished whole. But, to understand the full significance of their work, we must imagine what the world was like before their works existed and visualize, if we can, the emotions of the young man as he first became aware of himself. What was the horizon of his world at that moment? What was the atmosphere of life? Who were the conspicuous artists? These questions must always be asked, but they are of special importance when circumstances of life have changed totally, as they have changed in the United States since 1800. And they gain a larger importance, since the decisions made and the tastes revealed by the American artists of 1800 mark the beginning of a new national culture.

There was nothing in the aspect of American life in the 1790's to suggest the appearance of a strong impulse toward painting in the next decade, still less to foreshadow the sudden, powerful expression of the

2. Anna Cabot Lowell, "Letter of July 23, 1810," *Massachusetts Historical Society Proceedings*, XVIII (2d ser., 1904), 314.

romantic spirit which appeared in Allston's paintings of 1804-5. The intellectual activity of the country was absorbed by politics and religion. The dramatic events of the French Revolution and the rise of Napoleon cast a lurid glare on the struggle between Jeffersonian Republicans and Federalists. In the arts the theater had made its appearance in New York and Philadelphia, and in science the American naturalists had already made important contributions. But in painting there was no artistic activity to speak of, no collections or collectors of art, no academies, no exhibitions, no studio life. Benjamin West, who was an important pioneer in the proto-romantic movement, had been in London for more than thirty years and Copley for twenty. Of the painters in the Revolutionary generation, Trumbull, discouraged by the lack of support in America, had given up the struggle and gone abroad as American commissioner of claims growing out of the peace treaty with England. The only clearly developed movement in painting was the portraiture of Stuart, Malbone, and Peale. Stuart had returned to America and, leaving behind him the eighteenth-century types of portrait composition, had created the simple bust portrait of the classical style—an isolated, timeless image, without movement or setting, which was the model for the portraits of the classical period of American taste. The younger classical portrait painters like Jarvis and Wood were to appear in the coming decade. In architecture the pioneers in the classic movement, Latrobe and Bulfinch, were still to make themselves felt.

However, a marked change in the imaginative climate had begun to appear in American literature by 1800. In Boston, Joseph Story wrote to a friend (1799) that the German romantic melodramas ruled the stage. "Kotzebue is the presiding deity of our theatre. The rage for his plays is unbounded. The development of the bolder and fiercer passions alone seems now to command the attention of an American audience. All must be 'wrapt in clouds, in tempest tost;' alternately chilling with horror, or dazzling with astonishment. This mania, however, is not peculiar to us. The polished Cumberland and the masterly Sheridan have already been driven from the London theatres by the northern poets. Shakespeare himself might tremble for his supremacy, had he not for-

tunately created the sportive Ariel and the ghost of Hamlet's father."<sup>3</sup> At the same time the engaging painter-dramatist, William Dunlap, was translating melodramas from the German and Spanish for the New York stage.

Almost exactly contemporary with Allston's first oils appeared the novels of the first American novelist, Charles Brockden Brown, eight years Allston's senior, which were written in rapid succession between 1798 and 1801. The fantastic and gloomy world of Brown's novels reveals clearly a break from the clear, practical thought of eighteenth-century men like Franklin and Washington. Another writer, Washington Irving, born in 1783 and thus four years younger than Allston, is also significant of the temper of this generation. Irving, a young lawyer just ready for the bar at twenty-one, had been threatened with tuberculosis and sent abroad to travel for his health. He met Allston in Rome in the spring of 1805. Their friendship was renewed in London in 1815. After his return to New York, Irving had dashed off *Salmagundi* and "Knickerbocker's" *History* to relieve the tedium of the law. But he did not yet regard himself as an author when he went to England in 1815 to manage the Liverpool office of the family business. The crash of the family merchant firm finally threw him, hesitating and self-distrustful, upon his pen for support. The first number of the *Sketch Book* was published at New York in 1819. During the years 1815-18 Allston saw much of Irving, and he made two illustrations for the edition of the *History* which Murray published in London<sup>4</sup> after Allston's return to America (Pl. XXXVI).

But the American writer closest to Allston was William Ellery Channing. He was Allston's schoolmate, brother-in-law, and lifelong friend.<sup>5</sup> Channing is a most significant figure. He represents—indeed, he is a principal creator of—the contemplative and introspective strain of thought which was to change and invigorate the life of New England, the region where Allston was to live. Channing, mystic, orator, essayist,

3. William Wetmore Story, *Life and Letters of Joseph Story* (2 vols.; Boston, 1851), I, 81.

4. One of these appeared in "Murray's Edition," which was chiefly illustrated by Leslie. The other remained in Irving's possession and was finally used in the "Author's Edition" brought out in New York by G. P. Putnam.

5. Elizabeth Palmer Peabody, *Reminiscences of Reverend William Ellery Channing*, p. 449.

and thinker, was the great forerunner of the Transcendentalists. He and not the academic historians and critics who founded the *North American Review* in 1815 is the key to the development of American imaginative literature.

Channing had the optimism of the age. He believed in the natural goodness of man. It was not affectation which made him say: "We pretend not to have thrown off national feeling; but we have some stronger feelings. We love our country much, but mankind more. As men and Christians, our first desire is to see the improvement of human nature. . . . In all nations we recognize one great family, and our chief wish for our native land is, that it may take the first rank among the lights and benefactors of the human race."<sup>6</sup> The genuine idealism, the awareness of mankind as a family and of the future as a source of hope for all, which was aroused by the American and French revolutions, Channing put into a form which profoundly affected American life. That faith met many disappointments and checks, but it remained the motive force of our intellectual life, and in the shape of a belief that the world's best thought was the common inheritance of men as brothers it permeated the arts.

A sense of widening horizons, the assertion of culture as a universal inheritance, and the predominance of literature making itself felt in all interests and all arts were characteristics of the age which was then opening. Another characteristic was the interest in the past. It was an age of idealism, that is to say, an age whose chief search was within the consciousness; the observation of nature was for a time a lesser interest. The type of mind which explores within itself has memory as one of its great elements. It uses both memories of its own experience and memories of the race embodied in history and in the monuments of the past. The great revolutions going on during Allston's earliest years were attempts of modern society to stop in its path, throw aside existing forms, and remodel itself, not by theories of economics or of race, but on theories of the moral dignity of man based upon the memory of past ages. Never

6. William Ellery Channing, *Remarks on National Literature*, in *The Works of William E. Channing, D.D.* (Boston, 1877), p 125.

has the past seemed so essentially an image of the present and of the future as when men were engaged in trying to re-erect the republics of Greece and Rome in Paris and in the new Capitol rising on the shores of the Potomac. It was as natural for artists to think in images of the past as it was to breathe the air about them.

Poor as the artist of 1800 was in material resources, he enjoyed certain advantages of outlook. For one thing he saw his art in a much clearer and simpler perspective than that offered to the modern artist. As one looked backward from the standpoint of an American or English artist in 1800, painting appeared as a relatively single-minded, long, and sustained effort which had achieved enormous success. The artist of the twentieth century on the contrary looks back upon a hundred and fifty years strewn like a battlefield with the wrecks of shattered schools and confused and conflicting purposes which broke down with the generation that produced them, to be trampled underfoot by the next. The spectacle gives an air of uncertainty and failure (in spite of all its brilliant accomplishments) to a period that began with such high hopes but has changed its mind so often. If the nineteenth century had also its great painters, those who have studied their lives closely know what a price they paid for their achievement in the maze of intellectual doubts, technical weaknesses, and aesthetic confusions through which they had to find their way. The nineteenth century finally ended with a spiritual crisis so great that whole schools of artists tried to break altogether away from it and to go back for a new beginning to some other period or to the art of some other race entirely. And, with each decade since, American art has once more changed its mind. Allston and his contemporaries in America and Great Britain looked back, however, upon a continuity of three centuries filled with works so glorious and talents so great that they still constitute the classic achievements of Western painting. This continuity of achievement extending from the Renaissance to the end of the baroque world was a horizon so different from ours that it is worth while to take some pains to reconstruct it.

In France and Germany, Winckelmann and David had already begun the first of those violent revolts against contemporary practice which



were to confuse and darken the nineteenth century. But it was the special quality of painting in England and America (whose courses lay close together and even intertwined but which were already distinct currents) that it did not break the continuity of Western civilization; it never lost touch with the past but added its new sensibility to the great stream of a living technical tradition. This was what gave English painting, in the second and third decades of the nineteenth century, its power to instruct the painters of the Continent. Géricault and Delacroix, who were to refound the greatness of French painting, were profoundly moved by their contact with English painting; the influence of Lawrence, Wilkie, and Flaxman was strong also in central Europe. The bare historical fact of this stimulus is well known, but its significance is not understood. The reason for the influence exerted by the English painters does not lie in their individual greatness, for they were in most cases not artists of the first rank. It is rather that they had preserved a tradition of technique (which means also a way of seeing) that had been lost by the Continent. Allston and the other Americans from their own point of view shared the same tradition.

The continuity of achievement upon which Allston looked back as he studied his profession, first, largely from prints and books in America, then, in the active studio life of London, and, finally, among the old masters in the Louvre and in Rome, had its highest points in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. It began in Italy with the great Roman and Venetian painters, Raphael and Michelangelo, Titian, Tintoretto, and Veronese. It included the sweep of the seventeenth century in Italy, France, Flanders, and Holland. The eighteenth century from the American perspective appeared to be Hogarth and the English portrait and landscape painters, for the French and Italian painters of those periods were little known to Americans. Finally, in the immediate foreground, were two stimulating and suggestive developments, one in painting and one in literature, which formed the atmosphere of a nascent romanticism. The first, in painting, was the rise of the melodrama or the so-called "sublime" in West, Fuseli, and Vernet. The second was the worship of Shakespeare, which filled all minds and colored the intellectual tone of

life. It is impossible to comprehend this age unless we remember that it was a great period of the English and American stage. Artists went constantly to the theater, and their minds were permeated by dramatic effects and especially by the grandiose, fabulous, passionate, and intensely human images of Shakespeare.

In the horizon of 1800 what we know as realism in art—the discovery of imaginative experience in the direct, objective contemplation of nature—played relatively a smaller part than it does in our perspective. This aspect of Western art (the counterpart of the achievements of science in the field of the intellect) had already flowered in the seventeenth century, especially among the Dutch; but the achievements of nineteenth-century realism had not yet come to confirm its meaning and importance. Seventeenth-century realism, instead of being seen as one of the most original developments of Western artistic perception, was at this time misunderstood and worse. Sir Joshua Reynolds, forty years before, had led a revolution in English painting to break the ancient and instinctive connection between English taste and the art of the Low Countries and to found a new British style of painting modeled after the “grand style” of the Roman and Bolognese painters. His *Lectures* gave authority to his low view of Dutch painting. English painters from that time on decried the Dutch. Even a painter like Opie, an interesting realist in his own portraiture, speaks of “the gross vulgarity and meanness of the works of the Dutch” in his *Lectures on Painting* delivered at the Royal Academy in 1807,<sup>7</sup> and similar expressions were commonplace. English collectors meanwhile continued to value the Dutch as much as ever, thus offering an unusual instance of the amateur staying on the right track while the painters went off on a tangent. Usually it is the other way around. One of Allston’s achievements as a theorist of art was to achieve a more modern understanding. There is a brilliant description in the *Lectures on Art* of the *imaginative* quality of a kitchen scene by Ostade. But, as yet, in the horizon of 1800, realism played a small part.

The world shared instead one of those intense, temporary enthusiasms

7. John Opie, *Lectures on Painting, Delivered at the Royal Academy of Arts* (London, 1809), p. 12.

which sweep like equinoctial storms through the climate of taste. The greatest single event in the world of art during Allston's student years was the opening of Napoleon's Louvre, filled with the treasures of the French royal collections and with the spoils of Italy, Germany, and Spain. Nothing like that spectacle of art had ever been seen before in the modern world. The development of the modern art museum was largely determined by it for a century. When the peace of 1802 opened France to the peoples of the Atlantic, all the artists in England rushed to see it. In the Louvre Allston discovered Rubens and the Venetian painters. But the popular sensation was the sculpture. Mme Vigée-Lebrun tells in her memoirs of how, on her first visit to the Louvre after her return from exile, she lost track of the hours in the sculpture galleries and found herself locked in the deserted building at night.<sup>8</sup> The neoclassic revolution of taste initiated a generation before by Antonio Canova and Jacques Louis David had chosen the "Apollo Belvedere" as the masterpiece of all time. It seems to us today a typical work of the second order, coldly skilful and elegant in form, but shallow in inspiration and unsympathetic in feeling. But its idealized marble profile and flowing outlines left a stamp upon that generation's way of seeing. To the world of 1800 the "Apollo" symbolized nobility of style, and a decade later the Elgin marbles had to struggle for recognition against the prevailing taste. When Allston first saw the "Apollo" in 1803, he described the experience as "a sudden intellectual flash filling the whole mind with light and light in motion."

In other important aspects the practice of painting in 1800 was closer to that of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries than to that of the twentieth. When Allston arrived in London, West had already been engaged for thirty-five years and Trumbull for fifteen upon their attempt to create a monumental, narrative type of painting. David and his school in France, Mengs and the neoclassicists in Germany, were doing the same. But, while the style of these artists was novel, the aim of narrative painting was as old as Western painting itself and was linked with the greatest achievements of the Renaissance and baroque. This aim, which

8. Marie Anne Élisabeth Vigée-Lebrun, *Souvenirs* (New York, 1879), p. 329.

Allston also adopted, is altogether foreign to most of the aesthetic theories of the twentieth century and must struggle against a prejudice in modern minds which the recent vogue for mural painting has done little to remove. Modern taste has been trained to reject as inartistic what is variously called "illustration," "literary painting," "impure" works of art (Roger Fry) or, let us say briefly, realistic subject matter that means anything to the artist. In avoiding it, modern painting has abandoned many aims and interests which were not only natural to the great painters of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries but which formed an essential element of their greatness. Various theories of painting formulated at the beginning of the twentieth century held that the representation neither of nature nor of states of human feeling (outside those of the artist himself) is a proper aim of painting. The aim of painting was to be either plastic form, a purely abstract vision, or the expression of the artist's own subjective state of mind. This taste was partly founded upon a reaction from the factitious sentimental genre painting that flourished in the later nineteenth century, partly upon the normal rebound from the nineteenth-century realists' study of nature. It was even more largely based upon the primitivism of the early twentieth century, with its delight in the stylized forms of medieval and primitive arts. But the twentieth-century artist was interested only in the style of these arts and ignored the strongly didactic, narrative, and religious purposes of both the medieval and the primitive artist. The development of a new aim for painting, at the beginning of the present century, consisted largely in rooting out all the elements of the realistic and narrative representation of nature which had been traditional since the beginning of Western painting. The reaction culminated in the aesthetics of abstract form. So far as this movement was merely reaction, it too has passed. The thing it reacted against—the sentimental genre of the later nineteenth century—has disappeared of its own weakness, so that the protest against it no longer has any meaning. I remember how as art students in the twenties we learned to say that the old masters really were good painters in spite of their subject matter. One had only to ignore the subject and look at the composition to enjoy them properly. This was the period when Leo Stein,

who was then living in Florence, is reported to have said that what really interested Rubens when he painted his two majestic poems of the life of nature in the two famous landscapes in the Pitti was to make two compositions in iron-gray and orange-brown. And, to demonstrate his argument, Mr. Stein painted two abstractions in iron-gray and orange-brown to show what Rubens had really meant to do.

The artists of 1800, however, saw the compositions of Rubens and Raphael, Poussin and the Carracci, for what they were: pictures in which the narrative subject was important to the artist and in which he used all the resources of drawing, chiaroscuro, and color to give vitality to the human subject. The romantic period, like the Renaissance, believed that painting could deal *in its own way* with all that interested the artist; and, because it was profoundly interested in moral questions, in dramatic states of feeling, in nature, in literature, in history, it directed its genius in painting toward all these things. Like the Renaissance, the romantic period was permeated by literature. One art in its moments of greatness will always exert its influence upon the way all artists think and feel. Architecture in the thirteenth century, sculpture in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and painting in the seventeenth century were so great that they left their mark upon all that was done in the imaginative life. And during the great flowering of literature in the romantic period one would as soon expect painters like Allston or Blake, David or Prud'hon, to be free of literary interests as to expect thirteenth-century sculpture to show no architectural qualities.

## *Chapter Five*

### Art Student in London

IN THE summer of 1800, after graduating from college, Allston spent a few months at Newport, where his future wife, Ann Channing, lived. He painted there the half-length portrait of his schoolmaster, Robert Rogers, that is now in the Redwood Library and Athenaeum, Newport (Pl. IV). It is a direct, objective study of personality which takes its place in the line of Copley's direct realism and shows no trace of a desire to try out traditional forms of composition. What interested him was to set down, simply and objectively, the character of a rather formidable man.

In December, 1800, Allston returned for the first and last time to Charleston to persuade his family that art should be his career. His stepfather, Dr. Flagg, wished him to take up medicine; family desires were of greater importance in 1800 than today. But consent was secured, and Allston sold his share of the family land to finance his study abroad. Sweetser, one of his early biographers, says: "The Allston estates at Waccamaw were in the hands of executors, one of whom offered the young heir a fraction of its real value for his part of the property. The artist's heart was with the aesthetic treasures of Europe, and had no yearning for the patriarchal life of a Carolina planter; and so, fearful of litigation and delays, and unskilled in matters of business, he disposed of his share of the paternal domain at a ruinous sacrifice, and appropriated the proceeds to his support in Europe. Not only that, but so ignorant was he of affairs that he made no attempt to live on the generous interest which might have accrued from the moneys which he received, but deposited

his funds with a London banker, and drew directly and freely thereon until they were exhausted."<sup>1</sup>

Another account, apparently quite unsubstantiated, is that the dishonesty of an agent later cut off Allston's income and caused him to return to America in 1818. The point is important only for its result upon his work. He began life with means enough so that he did not have to think of money. He was able to travel and to study abroad, marry on his return, and to live without display but also apparently without serious worries. But by the time he was thirty-five his patrimony had vanished, and, when he returned to Boston in 1818, he was wholly dependent upon the sale of his paintings. Money worries thereafter became a serious hindrance to his work.

In Charleston Allston renewed his acquaintance with two admirable miniaturists, Malbone and Fraser. He also saw in the Charleston library Fuseli's illustrations for Boydell's Shakespeare Gallery, which deepened his interest in the contemporary school of romantic melodrama. He had already painted, in college, several subjects from Schiller's *The Robbers*, *The Mysteries of Udolpho* by Mrs. Radcliffe, *The Mountaineers* by George Coleman, and the tragedy of *Barbarossa*. In April, 1800, he had painted the "Man in Chains" (Pl. III), which is now in the Addison Gallery, a drawing for which is on the flyleaf of his copy of Charles Churchill's works which is inscribed "Harvard College 1799." Lest anyone should underestimate the power and significance of this now forgotten literary movement in the formation of the nineteenth century, let us remember what Sir Walter Raleigh said of Mrs. Radcliffe: "It is a testimony of the power of her art that her fancy first conceived a type of character that subsequently passed from art into life. The man that Lord Byron tried to be was the invention of Mrs. Radcliffe."<sup>2</sup>

But the next generation of romanticism aimed at other effects than the melodrama of the *Sturm und Drang* period. In Charleston Allston began to think of some conceptions of mystery and grandeur drawn from other models. He painted a "Satan Rallying His Hosts" from Milton's

1. Moses F. Sweetser, *Allston* (Boston, 1879), p. 1.

2. Sir Walter Raleigh, *The English Novel* (London, 1894), p. 228.

*Paradise Lost* and two subjects from the Bible, a "Head of Judas Iscariot" and a "Head of St. Peter When He Heard the Cock Crow." For twenty years to come his work was to be filled with the great emotions of the magnificent, the awe-inspiring, the tragic, and the mysterious opened up to him by these thoughts.

In May, 1801, Allston sailed with Malbone as companion for England. His first impressions of the English world of art are given in a letter to Charles Fraser:

"You will no doubt be surprised that among the many painters in London I should rank Mr. West as first. I must own I myself was not a little surprised to find him such. I left America strongly prejudiced against him, and indeed I even now think with good reason, for those pictures from which I had seen prints would do no credit to a very inferior artist, much less to one of his reputation. But when I saw his gallery and the innumerable excellences which it contained, I pronounced him one of the greatest men in the world. I have looked upon his understanding with indifference, and his imagination with contempt, but have now reason to suppose them both vigorous in the highest degree. No fancy could have better conceived and no pencil more happily embodied the visions of sublimity than he has in his inimitable picture from Revelation. Its subject is the opening of the seven seals, and a more sublime and awful picture I never beheld. It is impossible to conceive anything more terrible than Death on the white horse, and I am sure no painter has exceeded Mr. West in the fury, horror and despair which he has represented in the surrounding figures. I could mention many others of similar merit, but were I particular on each I should not only weary you but write myself asleep."<sup>3</sup>

This painting of "Death on the Pale Horse" which roused such admiration in Allston was either the admirable small study now in the Philadelphia Museum of Art or the study at Petworth. West reached the peak of his career in these pictures, which are far superior to the dull colossal picture done in 1817 during his years of decline (and executed

3. Quoted in full by Jared B. Flagg, *Washington Allston, Life and Letters*, pp. 42-48.



largely by his son) that is now in the Academy in Philadelphia.<sup>4</sup> West was one of those men of talent who form perhaps a better mirror of their times than does the man of genius, about whom there is more of the exceptional. With thirty years of distinction behind him, he was now at the top of his profession. In 1792 he had been unanimously elected to succeed Sir Joshua Reynolds as president of the Royal Academy. When he visited Paris in 1802 and showed his "Death on the Pale Horse" at the Salon, he was received by the French with great honor and made a member of the National Institute. In 1804 he was made a member of the Royal Bavarian Academy at Munich. His theatricalism was to be replaced by more substantial qualities in the generation of 1800, but, flat in feeling as he seems to us, one must not underestimate his achievement as a painter and especially as a pathfinder for the new era.

Allston went on in his letter to Fraser that next, after West, was Fuseli. He based his admiration upon Fuseli's wild romantic visions and especially on his paintings from Milton and Shakespeare. Fuseli is today even more completely out of fashion than West. But the rough old Swiss painter was a man of force and intelligence and, as his writings show, a critic of fine sensibility. His strange and lurid imagination expressed itself in a coarse but effective style of violent movement, color, and chiaroscuro. After Fuseli, Allston put "the bold and determined delineation of character" in Opie's imaginative compositions and the "effect" in Northcote's, though he dismissed the latter quality as a subordinate excellence. The portrait painters did not interest him. He mentioned Lawrence and Beechey as the best of the portrait painters, "but even Lawrence cannot paint so well as Stuart; and as for the rest they are the damnedest stupid wretches that ever disgraced a profession." Allston had not come to London to learn to be a painter of portraits.

The key to the emotions which the romantic artist was to seek to express is found in his praise of the "visions of Sublimity" of West's "Death on the Pale Horse." The notion of the sublime has today faded to an echo of the title of Burke's essay *On the Sublime and the Beautiful*.

4. Fiske Kimball, *Pennsylvania Museum Bulletin*, XXVI (January, 1930-31), 17, and *Gazette des beaux-arts*, VII (June, 1932), 403.

But in 1800 it was a word of power. It indicated the excitement caused by the extraordinary enlargement of the artists' imaginative sensibility brought about during the romantic movement. For this was a moment of crisis. The magnificent range of inspiration which the seventeenth century had given imaginative art had been gradually reduced during the eighteenth century, in painting, into a narrow field of decorative charm and graceful sentiment. Now, as the generations succeeded one another, romanticism reopened the mind to the voices of our consciousness from beyond the range of reason, to "those intuitive powers," as Allston later wrote, "which are above and beyond both the senses and the understanding." Men were seeking to renew contact with the emotional and intuitive bases of our civilization. Some artists turned to the spirit of the Middle Ages, which spoke of energy, passion, faith, and splendor; some to Christianity, which spoke of the beauty and mystery of life; some to the life of simple men and to the animals and plants, which spoke of the instinctive, unreasoning life of nature; some to nature itself as a vast realm of experience to be explored. In that enlargement Allston was now to play his part.

We are strongly affected at present by reaction against the worship of the English portrait painters by American collectors of a generation ago, so that it is hard for us not to be unjust to the artistic life which Allston found in London in 1801. As his letter to Fraser shows, he did not find English portrait painting helpful or even interesting. But, if there was no painter of the greatest rank then in London, there was an extremely active artistic life from which a student with keen wits and clear ideas could learn a great deal.

The activity of the world of art in London revolved about the two characteristic institutions of nineteenth-century art—the art school and the annual exhibition. The Royal Academy, founded thirty years before, maintained a class in drawing from the living model, to which students were admitted after producing a satisfactory drawing from a cast. One must imagine this art school as small (at this time it never had more than about thirty students) and organized differently from a modern school. It did not teach painting. The sole aim of instruction was drawing the

human figure. The Academy also had professors of painting, architecture, anatomy, and perspective, but their function was to offer set public lectures at infrequent intervals. Fuseli was, for instance, the professor of painting during Allston's first stay in London. He had been elected to succeed Barry in 1799 and, starting in 1801, gave three lectures a year. The crowds who went to hear them were great, and, Allan Cunningham says, their cheers vehement. Six of these lectures which were afterward printed are on the subjects of ancient art, modern art, invention, composition, expression, and chiaroscuro. Their aim, as Cunningham says, "was to impress on his audience a sense of the nobleness of art, and the high purpose to which alone it ought to be dedicated."<sup>5</sup> The supervision of the school was the duty of the keeper, who maintained order and criticized the students' drawings, with some assistance from visitors. When Allston arrived in London, the keeper was a sculptor named Joseph Wilton (who may be remembered for the theatrical monument of General Wolfe in Westminster Abbey), but he was in poor health, and the school was much neglected.<sup>6</sup> When Wilton died in 1803, the Academicians named Fuseli keeper. But, although he sometimes corrected the students' drawings vigorously enough or gave them a touch of his sarcastic tongue, he was more likely to bring a book and sit in the classroom reading, leaving the students to themselves.<sup>7</sup> Fortunately for the students, the life-class was not used by them alone. A number of the older painters liked to come in and draw from a model in the evening after their regular day's work was done, so that a student might have Turner or another of the rising young men at the easel next to him.

Painting was the students' own concern. They painted at home, following their own bent. The custom was to call upon one of the older painters if one wanted criticism. For Americans this meant usually a call on Benjamin West, for he not only was friendly and ready to give

5. Allan Cunningham, *The Lives of the Most Eminent British Painters and Sculptors* (New York, 1854), II, 253.

6. On June 6, 1800, West mentioned to Farington the necessity of appointing a deputy for Wilton to superintend the school; but nothing came of the plan.

7. Charles Robert Leslie, *Autobiographical Recollections: Edited with a Prefatory Essay on Leslie as an Artist and Selections from His Correspondence*, by Tom Taylor (Boston, 1860), p. 25.

time to students but had a good collection of pictures which he allowed students to study. In those days there was no public collection of art in London, so that West's gallery was an important opportunity for students. But, although West was always accessible and kind, students also called on other painters, with a drawing or canvas in hand, to ask advice. A few of the successful portrait painters were too grand to be visited, for there is a constitutional antipathy between art students and liveried servants. Some others, like Northcote, were too gruff and eccentric to be of much help. But the custom must have provided, on the whole, a good school of men and manners as well as of art.

The Royal Academy also held an annual exhibition which, unlike modern annuals, paid a handsome profit that more than met the expenses of the entire institution. In 1801 it contained 1,037 works. But still there was not room for all the artists, and a second exhibition—known as the British Gallery or British Institution—was founded under the patronage of the Prince of Wales (the future George IV), who was always ready to support a rival to one of his father's projects. This institution, unlike the Academy, was founded and controlled by laymen. At first, its sole aim was to sell the work of contemporary artists; but, after a few years, it also began to hold loan exhibitions of older pictures from private collections.

Allston arrived in London with Malbone about the middle of June, 1801. His home for the next two years was at 51 Upper Titchfield Street, Marylebone, just north of Regent's Park in what was then one of the new quarters of London. Primrose Hill, on the outskirts of the city, rises immediately to the east of Titchfield Street, and he must have been familiar with its famous view. To the south, between Titchfield Street and the City, lay the streets and squares—Fitzroy, Cavendish, Bedford, Russell—which still make London one of the pleasantest of the great cities of the world. He promptly set to work to gain admission to the life-class of the Academy, and his third drawing secured him a student's ticket. Soon afterward he met Benjamin West, who treated him with the generous kindness that was the older man's unfailing characteristic. In West's gallery Allston and Malbone looked at his old masters and showed

contrasting attitudes that were to mark generations of future American art students. Allston was delighted to see Titian, Rembrandt, and Veronese. Malbone would look at nothing but his contemporaries and declared a Lawrence was preferable to all the old pictures ever painted. After visiting the galleries of the British portrait painters, and drawing for a time at the Academy, Malbone returned at the end of five months to Charleston, where work awaited him. He felt, and rightly, that the portrait painters of London had nothing to teach him; other kinds of painting were outside his field and did not interest him.

Allston, in whose horizon portraits played small part, remained. In the following year he sent three pictures to the British Institution: a landscape painted in Cambridge, "A Rocky Coast with Banditti," and a humorous subject, "A French Soldier Telling a Story." The owner of the European Museum bought the latter as well as a companion picture, "The Poet's Ordinary," which Allston painted for him. A study of a brooding figure of a woman, strongly influenced by Titian, called "A Study from Life" (on loan to the Metropolitan Museum of Art), and a landscape in the Concord Free Public Library (Pl. V) likewise belong to this period. His work was still tentative in character. It was bolder in scale than the work he had done in America, larger in drawing, and more vigorous in tone; but the color was not yet interesting, and his painting not yet personal. It was the work of a good student, busy absorbing the language of painting from its greatest teachers, the old masters.

In the summer of 1803 a young New York painter, John Vanderlyn, a protégé of Aaron Burr, arrived from France in company with the American minister to France, James Monroe. Vanderlyn was three years older than Allston. The many-sided Colonel Burr had financed his studies, first with Stuart in Philadelphia and then with Vincent, a painter of the school of David, from 1796 to 1801 in Paris. After a brief trip back to New York (during which he painted Burr's portrait and that of his daughter Theodosia, the wife of Allston's cousin who was then governor of South Carolina), Vanderlyn was now returning to France with a commission to buy casts for an American Academy projected in New York by Chancellor Livingston. He brought with him two views he had

painted of Niagara Falls, which he intended to have engraved in London. All these activities, and his five years in France, may have made Vanderlyn seem to Allston the man to introduce him to the Continent. As American citizens the two painters did not fear the renewal of the Napoleonic Wars, which were to cut the English artists off from the Continent for another ten years.<sup>8</sup> In November, 1803, Allston and Vanderlyn set off together and traveled through Holland and Belgium to Paris.<sup>9</sup>

8. The Peace of Amiens lasted only from March, 1802, to April 29, 1803.

9. Although the war had interrupted regular communication, merchant vessels still traded busily between England and Holland. The Countess de Boigne, returning to France in September, 1804, from England, sailed in a Dutch vessel whose papers represented her as coming from Emden. At Brill the customs officer asked: "This boat is from Grand Emden?"

"Yes, sir, from Grand Emden."

"All right," he said, and returned the ship's papers. Grand Emden, in their slang, was London (*Memoirs of the Countess de Boigne* [New York, 1907], I, 177).

## *Chapter Six*

### The Meaning of Light and Color

**A**LL our knowledge begins with the senses, as Leonardo da Vinci observed. Painting is a language of the senses of sight and of touch, as literature and music are languages of the sense of hearing. (Since the invention of printing, literature has been also in some degree an art of the eye but only in an indirect fashion and in some degree, perhaps, to its injury.) The Western mind has become in the last five centuries more and more enslaved to the printed word, and our educated classes tend to forget that the experiences we receive through the senses of sight and touch are quite as important and as profound as those we receive through words. Painting, the pictorial language developed by our civilization to interpret these experiences, is very complex, but it has, so to speak, two main dialects according as the reports of the eyes or of the sense of touch predominate in it.<sup>1</sup> In the fifteenth century, for example, sculpture in Florence reached a development of such force and sensitiveness that it made itself felt through all the other arts. Florentine painting is the great example of a style permeated by exquisite perceptions of touch (drawing and plastic form), although, of course, by no means to the exclusion of visual perceptions of color and light. It is, however, typical of the degree to which words rule us that Bernard Berenson's brilliant essay on the "tactile" values of Florentine painting has made people talk as if that were all there is to Florentine art—as if color, tone (value), and light were not used with great skill and subtlety by

1. A third dialect in which the texture and glow of the paint itself predominate (as in certain medieval miniatures and some kinds of twentieth-century painting) does not enter into our discussion here. The paint-for-paint's-sake interest of modern painting was spiritually impossible in the mental climate of 1800.

Giotto, Masaccio, Baldovinetti, Fra Angelico, Leonardo, and even Michelangelo.

But, with the coming of the great Venetian painters of the sixteenth century, painting was carried on in the new medium—oil paint—and was developed into a new language in which the purely visual perceptions of light, color, and space assumed the predominant role. The sculptural qualities of form created by the Florentines were not lost but were assimilated by Titian, Tintoretto, and Veronese into a fresh style of symphonic richness—a language of solid forms moving freely through deep space, the whole conceived in terms of light and color—which is one of the supreme aesthetic achievements of mankind. Within this coloristic style, which was at once a mode of perception and a technique of expression, all the subsequent great developments of painting took place until the last quarter of the eighteenth century.

The neoclassic movement originating at Rome in the 1760's, two generations before Allston arrived there, generated a violent break from the coloristic tradition. The neoclassic theory of painting was the most dogmatic and the most purely intellectual theory of art our civilization knew before the twentieth century. It arose among German critics and was carried on by German and French artists, thus flourishing best (significantly enough) among the races most interested in intellectual abstraction. It had the good fortune to be taken up by one painter of great power, Jacques Louis David, whose commanding influence not only lent a lasting significance to neoclassic painting but formed a school beneath which the coloristic tradition was submerged in France for nearly two generations. The French classical idealists reverted to a sculptural language of line and form which can be much more accurately said to consist only of Berenson's "tactile values" than can Florentine painting. In German painting at the same time color tended progressively to disappear, so that, finally, the Nazarenes were at their best when working in black-and-white or even in pure outline.

Among English and American artists, however, painting was a more instinctive and unself-conscious practice. Reynolds, although not a great colorist (in his lectures he ranked Venetian painting below Bolognese),



had given English painting a coloristic technique of impasto and glazes and broad effects of tone based upon his studies of the baroque. The best of Gainsborough's canvases had been as coloristically subtle as Renoir's. Richard Wilson had founded English landscape painting upon light, tone, and space. English painting was tending toward a more superficial bravura when Allston came to London, and he noted in his letter to Fraser the English painter's inclination to "effect." But painters continued to see in terms of light and color and to express their perceptions in a coloristic style. At this time and for twenty years to come—until Bonington and Lawrence, Delacroix and Constable, reintroduced this vision again upon the Continent—London was the place in which a living tradition of color could best be studied. The diary of Joseph Farington gives a vivid impression of how dry and hard the French neo-classic pictures seemed to the English painters who visited Paris during the brief Peace of Amiens (1802), which was the only opportunity for contact between the two schools until after the close of the Napoleonic Wars.<sup>2</sup> Farington admitted freely that the French drew and composed better than the English, but he found them deficient in color and in feeling, a judgment which reflects the consensus of the English painters then in Paris. A decade later Lawrence exerted a great influence on Continental painting by his stay at Vienna during the Congress of Vienna. It is significant of the interest aroused by Lawrence's way of painting that, when fourteen years later a good French engraving first appeared of Lawrence's portrait of Pope Pius VII, painted at the Congress of Vienna, it excited Delacroix to publish an essay in praise of Lawrence's genius and to speak of the engraving as an important event in the artistic life of Paris.

Allston carried with him to Paris from his two years in London the technical knowledge which was the best gift the London studios had to give. He went to the Continent trained in the coloristic vision of light and tone (values) and equipped with the English coloristic technique, including the use of underpaint and glazes. How different this style was

2. Prud'hon, who is the great exception to this and who offers in many respects the closest parallel in French painting to Allston, did not come to attention until the Salon of 1809.

from the sculpturesque vision and the use of bare earth-colors which prevailed on the Continent is shown by two anecdotes. In Paris Allston made a copy of a cupid playing with the helmet of Mars in the foreground of Rubens' huge canvas of "Henry IV Receiving the Portrait of Marie de' Medici," then hanging in its original place in the Luxembourg Palace. In Henry Greenough's notes of Allston's conversation, which were taken down probably in the 1820's, Allston says:

"The French, I am told, have already greatly improved in color of late years. When I was in Paris they knew nothing of glazing. I was making a study from a picture of Rubens, one in the Luxembourg Collection, and was preparing my picture as I supposed the original to have been prepared, that is, instead of painting up my effect at once, I had painted certain portions different in actual color, to be modified afterward by glazing. I was somewhat annoyed in the course of my work by observing that the French artists were deriving great amusement from my picture at my expense. They frequently watched my progress and tittered together in groups. Some of them went to Vanderlyn (who was then in Paris) and told him there was a countryman of his in the gallery whom they pitied very much; I was in a sad mess, they said, and evidently didn't know what I would be at.

"It happened, however, one morning when I had commenced my preparation for glazing, and had commenced glazing a part of my picture, a Roman cardinal and his suite was passing through the gallery. You are aware that among the Italian clergy are many men who, having great learning and taste, devote much of their attention to the study of the fine arts, and become, in fact, much better judges of art than the present artists; not studying the art professionally, they do not, like the artists, become blinded by prejudices in favor of this or that system, but judge by the effects. As this cardinal was passing by me he stopped and examined my work with evident interest. He asked me of what country I was, where I had studied, etc., and ended with a compliment. 'Monsieur,' said he, 'vous vous entendez, je vous en fais mes compliments.' ('I see, sir, you understand what you are about; accept my congratulations.')

I don't hesitate to repeat this compliment, because I consider it as paid to the English school of color, where I had learned this process, and when some of the Frenchmen afterward made me the *amende honorable* for their previous rudeness, I disclaimed the merit of the compliment for the same reasons."<sup>3</sup>

The second anecdote comes from the studio tradition of the German artist colony in Rome and reflects the impact of a technical innovation after the lapse of nearly a quarter-century. In the three volumes of the *Beschreibung der Stadt Rom* by Platner, Bunsen, Gerhard, and Röstel, which is one of the monuments of German romantic scholarship in Italy, Ernst Platner, the author of the chapter on "Die Kunst in Rom von ihrer Wiederherstellung bis auf unsere Zeit" (1827), was interested to trace the course of art through the decline of the eighteenth century to its restoration by the German romantic painters of his own time. The hero of this restoration in his eyes was the short-lived Gottlieb Schick (1776–1812), who, after studying in Stuttgart, had gone to Paris and studied under David from 1798 to 1802, and then had come to Rome. He had been well disciplined by David in drawing and in a sense of form. But, says Platner, "Schick showed a no less correct sense of color than of drawing. By the study of the works of the greatest ages of painting he must quickly have perceived that with the downfall of the true color sense the true technical handling of oil paint had also been lost and that with the use of bare earth-colors brought in by the decay of art it was impossible to achieve a more correct tone, clarity and transparency of coloring. He sought therefore to use glazing: but as he did not know how to prepare the ground or underpaint in connection with the same, the use of them could not achieve the purpose desired, until a painter who came at that time to Rome, named Alston [*sic*], from the North American Republic, communicated the right procedure. The ability of this talented painter showed itself notably in landscapes, which were in particular distinguished far beyond the works of contemporary painters by a clarity and

3. Quoted by Jared B. Flagg, *Washington Allston, Life and Letters*, p. 188.

force of coloring approaching the works of the old masters, and therefore aroused Schick's particular attention."<sup>4</sup>

If Allston's stay in London had given him the technical processes he was to need, his experiences in the galleries of Napoleon's Louvre, in Italy, and in the mountains of Switzerland taught him what he wished to say. He discovered in Rubens and the Venetian paintings in the Louvre effects of grandeur and richness in the language of painting which were to affect all his future development. Allston made two visits to the Louvre, the first in 1803-4, the second in 1817. They mark periods in the development of his style. During his first visit he copied Rubens and was most concerned with the relation of color and light to form. The great Titian landscape (since destroyed) of "The Death of St. Peter Martyr" also helped him form his conception of the use of tone in landscape, as did the landscapes of Poussin and Claude. The "Peter Martyr" profoundly impressed all the painters who visited Paris from London. It was eagerly discussed in London studios, as we know from the Farington diaries and from the curious fact that Constable made it a feature of his lectures on landscape, although he had never visited Paris and had never seen the picture. Allston also studied Titian's portraits and derived from them the conception of the highly individual new portrait style he worked out later. He has left us a description of a discussion in the Louvre with William Hazlitt (later to become famous as an essayist, but at this time a student copying in the Louvre) about Titian's method of painting flesh tones.

In 1817 Allston came over again from London to Paris with his pupil, Leslie, and William Collins, the English landscape painter (whose life was written by his son, Wilkie Collins, the novelist). This time he made a singularly fresh and charming small copy of Veronese's "Marriage at Cana" and a study from Titian's "Adoration of the Magi." Years later he summed up his impressions:

"Titian, Tintoret, and Paul Veronese absolutely enchanted me, for

4. Ernst Platner, Christian Karl Josias Bunsen, E. Gerhard, and W. Röstel, *Beschreibung der Stadt Rom* (3 vols.; Stuttgart, 1827-42), I, 586-87.

they took away all sense of subject. When I stood before the *Peter Martyr*, *The Miracle of the Slave*, and *The Marriage of Cana*, I thought of nothing but the gorgeous concert of colors, or rather of the indefinite forms (I cannot call them sensations) of pleasure with which they filled the imagination. It was the poetry of color which I felt; procreative in its nature, giving birth to a thousand things which the eye cannot see, and distinct from their cause. I did not, however, stop to analyze my feelings—perhaps at that time I could not have done it. I was content with my pleasure without seeking the cause. But now I understand it, and *think* I understand why so many great colorists, especially Tintoret and Paul Veronese, gave so little heed to the ostensible *stories* of their compositions. In some of them, *The Marriage of Cana* for instance, there is not the slightest clue given by which the spectator can guess at the subject. They addressed themselves, not to the senses merely, as some have supposed, but rather through them to that region (if I may so speak) of the imagination which is supposed to be under the exclusive domination of music, and which, by similar excitement, they caused to teem with visions that ‘lap the soul in Elysium.’ In other words they leave the subject to be made by the spectator, provided he possessed the imaginative faculty—otherwise they will have little more meaning to him than a calico counterpane.”<sup>5</sup>

This passage, with its conception of a picture as the evocation of reverie, is a characteristic utterance of Allston’s later life. In 1803 he was not yet ready to give up the dramatic subject for the mood of reverie. But it shows both how well he understood the organic harmony of Venetian painting and at the same time how far removed was his own brooding spirit from the objectivity of the sixteenth century.

As the history of Delacroix’s influence upon French painting shows, the recovery of the coloristic vision was the most lasting contribution of the romantic movement to the future of painting. Allston has the historical interest that he gave American art a coloristic style as early as

5. Quoted by William Dunlap, *A History of the Rise and Progress of the Arts of Design*, II, 162–63.

## THE MEANING OF LIGHT AND COLOR

1805. It was a remarkably early date to have found his way to the love of light and color which was not only the solution to the problem of romantic expression but the key to the century's great developments in painting. When, in France, Delacroix and Corot achieved this same return to the coloristic tradition, they founded the greatness of French nineteenth-century painting, for which French painters of all shades of opinion have since paid them honor. That American painters were neither willing nor able (for the most part) to learn from Allston what the French learned from their romantic painters is regrettable but hardly affects the importance of his discovery.

## *Chapter Seven*

### The Transformation of Nature and of Man

THE Paris to which Allston and Vanderlyn came in November of the year 1803 was not the Paris which the modern world knows. The beautiful city painted by the Impressionists so often that the whole world is familiar with its charm and cheerful elegance is the creation of Baron Haussmann and the second half of the nineteenth century. The Paris of 1803 was very different both in outward aspect and in its spirit. It had not yet become the great pleasure city of the modern world. Outwardly it was small and rather more medieval than modern in appearance. The traveler from Holland and the north, approaching by the road from St. Denis, passed over a flat stretch of open country whose only feature was a village on a small hill to the right of the road, called Montmartre. Then, passing through suburbs, he came to the St. Denis gate, inside which was a city of tall stone or plaster houses that seemed even taller because the streets were so narrow. From its streets rose the famous smell which travelers still commented on as they had in the time of Villon or Louis XI. A medieval king of France, looking out a window of the Louvre, once fainted at the stench of the street below. Not until the engineering feats of the great Baron Haussmann did the odor of those medieval streets vanish into tradition. There were no boulevards and no Eiffel Tower in the Paris of 1803, no Madeleine and no Arc de Triomphe. The larger portion of the Louvre had still to be built, and where now the pleasant gardens of the Louvre are was a warren of close-packed medieval houses. Beyond the gardens of the Tuileries lay the vacant space made sinister by the terrible memory of the guillotine. The shadow of that instrument still hovered over the

city, although its labors had ceased ten years before. When Allston arrived, Napoleon had restored order with a strong hand and was seeking to re-create once more around himself the elegant society of the old regime. The twenty-six-hundred-odd persons who had died on the scaffold during the Reign of Terror, between September 5, 1793, and July 27, 1794, seem few enough compared with the endless butcheries of the modern world. But the world had then been taught by its literary men to believe that man was naturally rational and good. It had not been accustomed to mass massacres and to the sight of fanatics coldly murdering hundreds of thousands to prove a theory. The shock of that first outbreak of killing was so great that its memory is still green, while the vast systematized performances of our times are forgotten almost before they are over. As soon as Napoleon restored order in France, the eminently social nature of the French genius had begun to reassert itself. Farington, the English painter, who visited Paris in 1802, reported: "A remarkable change has taken place in the appearance of the people from what they were a few years ago, gloomy,—savage,—without regard to dress or cleanliness. They are now coming fast round to cheerfulness and civility." But he also noted that the houses of Paris were out of repair because people still felt too insecure to lay out money upon the care of their property. And if Napoleon, a child of the eighteenth century, was a milder despot than one of the modern sort, his government was, after all, a military dictatorship with its secret police and censorship of opinion and all the other traits we have learned to know so well. Moreover, France was again at war. The Grand Army lay encamped along the channel, poised for the invasion of England.

This Paris was not a city in which an American of Allston's day and temperament would linger for love of its atmosphere. Allston came there to study the Louvre. As a painter destined to be one of the pioneers of a new age of color, he found nothing to help him in contemporary French painting. He found instead Rubens, in the Luxembourg Palace, and in the Louvre the greatest paintings and the greatest sculptures (in the judgment of his time) of the Western world, forming a spectacle of art such as our civilization had never known before. There was enough to



keep him occupied. He said afterward that he "worked like a mechanic." He copied one of Rubens' figures in order to study his mastery of form and color and painted four pictures of his own. It may have been one of these, but more probably it was one of his London works, which he exhibited at the Salon of 1803. It was listed as No. 511, "Paysage. Site sauvage," and the artist's address was given as No. 1, Place Vendome. The title sounds like one of the Salvator-esque pictures of his London period. It was apparently "sky-ed," for Vanderlyn, writing to Allston in 1814 about the work of another painter, said: "Mr. Wallis by the way has met with nearly the same luck as your two pictures had, which you, when here sent to the Exhibition, he sent there four Landscapes one of which was not put up (and that I took to be the best) the other three were placed in bad and indifferent lights."<sup>1</sup>

Only two of these four pictures can be identified today—"Rising of a Thunderstorm at Sea" (Pl. VI) in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts and "The Deluge" (Pl. VII) in the Metropolitan Museum of Art—but they mark an epoch in American art.

The baroque world, which gave us our first great period of landscape painting, had seen nature in accordance with its own vision of reality, splendor, and serenity. Another and a more somber aspect of nature appears more rarely in the pervasive melancholy of Jacob van Ruisdael's paintings and in the bandit-haunted landscapes of Salvator Rosa. The search for the grand and awe-inspiring in nature began to assert itself with greater urgency with the appearance of works such as Piranesi's "Carceri" in the middle of the eighteenth century. Man's very success in achieving an ideal creates the need to turn toward a fresh goal. The eighteenth century, one of the most successful periods of artistic achievement, began to wish at last for release from its own good sense and elegance. At its end came Allston's generation, which talked of "visions of sublimity" and whose delight was in the wild, the solemn, and the majestic. It was comparatively easy to discover these qualities in waterfalls or wild mountain scenery, but to embody them in works of art called for a new artistic form. Allston had already begun to think about a way

1. John Vanderlyn to Allston, November 24, 1814, in the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

to express this aspect of nature in the landscapes painted at London under the influence of Salvator Rosa.<sup>2</sup>

When a whole generation revolts against its fathers' ways, it often happens that there are one or two men of the older generation who seem to be the pathfinders of the new way. Cézanne and Van Gogh played this role for the Post-Impressionists; West, Fuseli, and Vernet were ancestors of romantic painting in a similar fashion. Allston discovered in Paris the storms and shipwrecks of Joseph Vernet. The impression is discernible in his "Rising of a Thunderstorm at Sea," painted in the French capital in 1804. But this influence only emphasizes how great the difference was between the rococo and the romantic artist. There is always something of the rococo in Vernet's pictures. His palette of green, rose, and gray reflects the colors of the salons in which his pictures were hung. And, no matter how wild the storm or how frantic the struggle of the sailors in his drowning ships, there is always a touch in them of the theater, even of the ballet. The sailors on the ships, the spectators on the shore, pose, gesture, and respond in their tiny movements, dramatically and skilfully like a ballet; and one always feels that, at the end, they will run gracefully into the wings and come out bowing.

In Allston's thunderstorm the tremendous presence and power of nature, the smallness of man, and the gallantry of his will to master nature expressed by the beauty of the swaying ship are felt by a mind peculiarly open to impressions of solemnity and grandeur. The whole tone is changed. Nature had never been felt in this way by Vernet or in American painting. Landscape in America had until this time consisted of topographical views, whose simple and ingenuous charm can be well seen in the collection of topographic prints in the New York Public Library. The few painters, such as Earl, Trumbull, and Vanderlyn, who were turning to landscape at this time had not brought to it any differ-

2. Allston felt the influence of the Salvator Rosa tradition before leaving America, for he wrote to Dunlap: "Up to this time [his departure for London] my favorite subjects, with an occasional comic intermission, were banditti.—I well remember one of these where I thought I had happily succeeded in cutting a throat! The subject of this precious performance was, robbers fighting with each other for the spoils, over the body of a murdered traveler. And clever ruffians I thought them. I did not get rid of this banditti mania until I had been over a year in England" (William Dunlap, *A History of the Rise and Progress of the Arts of Design*, II, 156).

ence in sentiment or imaginative tone.<sup>3</sup> In the "Rising of a Thunderstorm at Sea" we are confronted for the first time in American art by the power of the artistic imagination to transfigure, without altering, the facts of nature by its sense of the poetry and mystery of existence. With its companion picture, "The Deluge," this is the first landscape of mood in American painting.

The initial impression which the eye receives is of two threatening masses of tone, the sky and sea, dominating the deep perspective. Color gives resonance to these broad sweeps of tone, and somber touches of blue, red, yellow, and purple among the sailors in the pilot boat create an accent in the foreground, where the line of the breaking wave catches the eye and leads it inward through the half-darkness to the horizon. From the horizon the eye follows the dark edge of the cloud upward until suddenly, through a break in the threatening darkness, appears the deep-blue sky and the light of sunset.

The simple dramatic force of this picture shows how far Allston was from the eighteenth century. The details strike the eye not as principles of a decorative composition but as experiences of the life of nature. Each contributes an element to the life of the scene. The sea is vast, swiftly moving, and powerful. The sinuous, violent surge of the wave in the foreground is a remarkable embodiment of the ocean's power. The horizon has the tremendous emptiness of space. The level rays of the sun on the storm clouds gleam with the splendid melodrama of nature.

"The Deluge" also goes in its subject back to the baroque. One of the last and most famous of Poussin's pictures in the Louvre is "The Deluge," which forms the "Winter" in a set of the four seasons executed in 1660-64 for the Duc de Richelieu; Poussin's picture was in turn inspired by a "Deluge" of Annibale Carracci. Allston again took up the theme. A few years later Turner, inspired by the grave eloquence and architectonic dignity of Poussin's picture, painted his "Deluge." But, while Poussin and Turner developed the heroic quality in this theme, Allston sought the mysterious. The first impact of his picture is an iron-gray murk, full of

3. Both Vanderlyn and Trumbull, for instance, painted their views of Niagara Falls with the intention of having them engraved.

space yet impenetrable to the eye and broken only by fragmentary lights in the foreground. On the brown beach lie three ashen bodies. Beside them a howling dog and three snakes, the only living creatures to survive the storm, add to the sense of horror. Beyond the beach are three faint spots of light among the wild shapes of gray foam, which may be human beings clinging to wreckage. All the rest is blackness and storm. But gradually, as one looks into the darkness, gray sea birds become visible, flying directly toward the observer—first six to the left, then eight more in the center, finally, at the right, far out and barely seen, three. The ghostly effect of these birds, the sensation they create of an infinite extent of darkness beyond the limits of sight, is very dramatic. The storm in the "Rising of a Thunderstorm at Sea" looks as if it would pass, leaving men at peace again. This storm is timeless; it is like looking from Noah's Ark at the destruction of everything.

Nature, as Whitehead observed, presents to the observer two obvious characteristics—loveliness and power. The power of nature and its mystery were painted for the first time by an American artist in these two pictures. Technically, Allston's subtle use of tone is the great distinction between his landscapes and the mass of romantic landscapes that came after him. He learned from the baroque to use a wide range of tone over a narrow range of hue (for resonance of tone rather than variety or brilliance of hue was the secret of the grandeur of "color" in Renaissance and baroque painting). Allston's use of tone in these two pictures did not approach the resonance of his later works, perhaps, but it is already subtle and impressive.

The character of an artist's mind and his way of seeing are created by his experiences as well as by his ideas. Allston's perception of nature was influenced by four great experiences. One was his childhood in Carolina, which did not make itself felt in his art until the delicate fantasies of his last years; another was the sea; the third was his journey through the Alps on his way to Italy; the fourth was Italy itself. These experiences formed the tone of his love of nature and underlay his imagination all the rest of his life. He left Paris probably in the late spring of 1804 and arrived in

Rome early in 1805, having stopped in Siena for a time to perfect his Italian, as so many other English-speaking travelers have done. On his way through Switzerland he passed by Lucerne, for he made a sketch of Mount Pilatus, and then over the St. Gotthard to Bellinzona. "The impressions left by the sublime scenery of Switzerland," he wrote thirty years later, "are still fresh to this day. A new world had been opened to me—nor have I met with anything like it since. The scenery of the Appenines is quite of a different character. By the by, I was particularly struck in this journey with the truth of Turner's Swiss scenes—the poetic truth—which none before or since have given; with the exception of my friend Brokendon's magnificent work, on the passes of the Alps. I passed a night and saw the sun rise on the Lake Maggiore. Such a sunrise! The giant Alps seemed literally to rise from their purple beds, and putting on their crowns of gold, to send up a hallelujah almost audible."<sup>4</sup>

An equally lasting impression was made upon him by the landscape about Rome. What Lionello Venturi once called the "religious" quality of the noble and solitary countryside which surrounds that city has been a decisive experience in the lives of many artists over many centuries. Claude Lorrain and Poussin, Jan Both and Gaspard Dughet, Fragonard, Wilson, Hubert Robert, Corot, and Allston, are only a few of those whose lives were never to lose the impression of this experience. In romantic art it was one of the great themes, exerting its spell upon painters and poets, novelists and scholars, alike.

Allston's impressions of Switzerland and Italy were embodied in a series of landscapes done in Italy immediately after his arrival. The earliest is the "Landscape with a Lake" (Pl. VIII), dated 1804, in the M. and M. Karolik Collection of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Like the landscapes done in Paris, it is painted with a direct touch and uses a wide, subtle range of tone, a narrow range of hue, and a simple contrast of warm and cool. The low tones of green and brown in the foreground are warm and dusky; the lake, sky, and mountains are cool, clear blue; the cold rocks are touched with the warmth of sunset. It is based upon careful study of nature, as is shown by a drawing for the

4. Dunlap, *op. cit.*, p. 165.

ferns in the foreground among the drawings in the Dana Collection. But the forms of nature have been transposed to another plane so that they become a reverie upon the wonder and delight of the artist's journey through the Swiss lakes and through the forests of the Alps.

The tentative quality apparent in this landscape has disappeared in a second canvas, "Diana in the Chase" (Pl. IX), painted at Rome in 1805. There is the rich, subtle sweep of tone, the severely limited range of hue, the subtle contrasts of warm and cool, which were to characterize his style from this time on. The warm green and brown foreground is in half-shadow; the lake and mountains are chill and blue. In the painting of the distant mountain, Allston introduced his first coloristic innovation, his own variety of "broken color" to create atmosphere and luminosity. He did not lay on the pigments side by side but one over another, so that the pigment below shows through that above (more like the style of Feininger or the later Kokoschka than the broken color of the French Impressionists). Sometimes, as he himself said to Henry Greenough, it required twenty such tints, one above another, to create the delicate veil of light and air he threw over such distant mountain peaks.

There are exact studies for the mountain and the solitary pine among the drawings in the Dana Collection. The mountain is Mount Pilatus and the lake is Lake Lucerne, so that the title "Swiss Scenery," which has also become attached to this picture, is not altogether a misnomer. Nevertheless, it is not a Swiss landscape in the same sense as are the charming topographic views which the Swiss artists produced in the eighteenth century. Even the grandiose water colors done by Turner on his first brief visit to Switzerland in 1802, although romantically heroic in tone, are still portraits of a recognizable locality. Allston's landscape, however, is an imaginative reverie upon the grandeur and the loveliness of nature. The images of nature are freely recombined and fused so that they represent his whole imaginative experience of the Alps. It is an example of those reveries which, with Corot, Inness, and Marées, were later to become so characteristic of the nineteenth century. The note of reverie which Allston introduced was perhaps more characteristic of American painting than of any other school: William Page and Inness, La Farge

and Ryder, Whistler, Martin, and Vedder, show how strong a part it was to play in our imaginative life. Reverie is a function of memory, and memory is one of the most powerful forces in the creative process. It changes facts into experiences, weaves into experience the overtones of association, and, in the memory of the true artist, distils those timeless and universal tones that are more easily recognized than described or explained. In the "Diana" the timelessness is emphasized by the choice of generalized figures of ancient poetry to inhabit it; but the figures echo, rather than create, the tone.

It is the first clear appearance of the personal tone which was to mark Allston's work. "Pictures do not merely speak: they also sing," observed the great connoisseur, Dr. Max J. Friedländer. This individual tone, more prominent than any detail and rising out of a harmony of the whole, is a harmony of feeling as well as an aerial harmony. Allston later spoke of this as the element which represents in a work of art the wholeness of nature. "Nothing in nature can be fragmentary, except in the seeming, and then, too, to the understanding only—to the feelings never. For a grain of sand, no less than a plant, being an essential part of the mighty whole which we call the universe, cannot be separated from the idea of the world without a positive act of the reflective faculties, an act of volition. But until then even a grain of sand cannot cease to imply it."<sup>5</sup> The artist cannot successfully abstract any part from this whole without supplying an equivalent harmony in his work. This equivalent, Allston said, must take two forms, each equally necessary. First, there must be a personal modification of every detail of the subject so that all are permeated by the artist's feeling. Second, these parts must be bound together in a harmony of form that mirrors in its completeness the interdependence of this world.<sup>6</sup> The traits of Allston's personal modification of nature are already clearly defined in this picture—the sense of harmony, the subtle use of tone to create a mood of reverie, the mingling of grandeur and grace, wonder and delight, and a large, even a grand, scale combined with a characteristic delicacy and tenderness.

5. *Lectures on Art and Poems*, p. 103. The punctuation is slightly modernized.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 105.

The atmosphere of Allston's years in Rome is preserved in a sketch by Washington Irving. Irving arrived at Rome only a few months after Allston and, Americans being *raræ aves* in Italy at that time, quickly made his acquaintance. Many years later he wrote:

"I first became acquainted with Washington Allston early in the spring of 1805. He had just arrived from France, I from Sicily and Naples. I was then not quite twenty-two years of age, he a little older. There was something, to me, inexpressively engaging in the appearance and manners of Allston. I do not think I have ever been more completely captivated on a first acquaintance. He was of a light and graceful form, with large blue eyes, and black, silken hair waving and curling around a pale, expressive countenance. A young man's intimacy took place immediately between us, and we were much together during my brief sojourn at Rome. . . . We visited together some of the finest collections of paintings, and he taught me how to visit them to the most advantage, guiding me always to the masterpieces, and passing by the others without notice. . . . He was exquisitely sensible to the graceful and the beautiful, and took great delight in paintings which excelled in color; yet he was strongly moved and roused by objects of grandeur. I well recollect the admiration with which he contemplated the statue of 'Moses' by Michael Angelo, and his mute awe and reverence on entering the stupendous pile of St. Peter's. Indeed, the sentiment of veneration so characteristic of the elevated and poetic mind was continually manifested by him. His eyes would dilate; his pale countenance would flush; he would breathe quick and almost gasp in expressing his feelings when excited by any object of grandeur and sublimity.

"We had delightful rambles together about Rome and its environs, one of which came near changing my whole course of life. We had been visiting a stately villa, with its gallery of paintings, its marble halls, its terraced gardens set out with statues and fountains, and were returning to Rome about sunset. The blandness of the air, the serenity of the sky, the transparent purity of the atmosphere, and the nameless charm which hangs about an Italian landscape, had derived additional effect upon being enjoyed in company with Allston, and pointed out by him with



the enthusiasm of an artist. As I listened to him and gazed upon the landscape, I drew in my mind a contrast between our different pursuits and prospects. He was to reside among these delightful scenes, surrounded by masterpieces of art, by classic and historic monuments, by men of congenial minds and tastes, engaged like him in the constant study of the sublime and beautiful. I was to return home to the dry study of the law, for which I had no relish, and as I feared, but little talent.

"Suddenly the thought presented itself: 'Why might I not remain here and turn painter?' . . . For two or three days the idea took full possession of my mind; but I believe it owed its main force to the lovely evening ramble in which I first conceived it, and to the romantic friendship I had formed with Allston. Whenever it recurred to mind it was always connected with beautiful Italian scenery, palaces and statues, and fountains, and terraced gardens, and Allston as the companion of my studio. I promised myself a world of enjoyment in his society, and in the society of several artists with whom he had made me acquainted, and pictured forth a scheme of life, all tinted with the rainbow hues of youthful promise."<sup>7</sup>

Allston's "Italian Landscape" (Pl. X), in the Addison Gallery of American Art, Andover, is the distillation of such impressions of Italy, of Rome and the Campagna, seen by an American romantic artist fresh from New England. It is an image with two imaginative themes, the grandeur of the Roman landscape and the sensation of the past. The emptiness of the Campagna is dotted with the ruins of antiquity as a landscape in America is with farmhouses and barns. The past greets one at every turn, haunting the imagination with its majesty until it becomes as real as the present. Claude Lorrain had once loved to reconstruct the splendor of vanished ports and temples in the midst of his landscapes. So Allston now saw the Roman landscape as a window opening from the present into time and mingled the Tiber, the Alban Hills, the plain, the splendor of antiquity, the medieval pilgrim, and the timeless pastoral simplicities of Italian peasant life all in one calm image.

7. Washington Irving, "Washington Allston," *Spanish Papers, Biographies and Miscellanies* (2 vols.; New York, 1866), II, 143-50.

The quality of a landscape (like that of any other branch of art) lies in the depth of the experience it embodies and in the aesthetic harmony of form established. Popular taste does not distinguish between the tourist-painter—who drives along today until he sees a view that pleases him, paints it, and goes on like any other tourist—and, on the other hand, the artist. The artist finds his subjects after long study of nature, choosing from the multiplicity of the universe the subject which inner necessity dictates, and makes his image of nature the expression of a profound imaginative experience. This is as true of the landscapes of a romantic idealist like Allston as of those of an objective realist like Homer. A conspicuous part of the loss of assurance of spiritual values which is characteristic of the twentieth century has been the conviction in the minds of so many artists that nature has no meaning for them, no important experience to offer as a reward for the effort to study it carefully and lovingly. Nature has been thought of as a source for the physicist, the chemist, the geologist, but not for the artist. In contrast, one of the chief articles of the artistic creed of romanticism was the importance of nature for our intellectual, emotional, and imaginative life. This was what Allston meant when he spoke in his *Lectures* of the “moral universe,” the universe as it is apprehended by our imagination and feelings, not as it is abstracted by a scientific technique of observation. It did not matter whether the romantic artist were a realist or idealist—these were only differences in method, not differences in opinion about nature.

In making his landscapes an evocation of experience, Allston resembles Corot, who came to Italy a generation later. Corot is certainly not less French because, instead of painting only at Fontainebleau, he went to Italy and there received impressions decisive for his taste and his feeling for nature, although some American critics have recently been ready to rule out as un-American any artist who ever studied or lived abroad. The memory of Italy was always, for both Allston and Corot, part of their way of seeing; the gentleness, the tranquil and slightly elegiac note, the *venustas* of that experience of natural beauty, left an ineffaceable stamp upon their consciousness. The same experience can be detected in Gaspar Dughet and Claude Lorrain, in Poussin and Jan Both. The memory of

the Alps and the Italian seacoast haunted the imagination of Pieter Bruegel. He incorporated these memories into his being so fully that, painting afterward in the midst of the Flemish plain, his mind saw not only the green fields outside Antwerp but the snow peaks and pine forests of the Alps or, when Icarus falls headlong into the sea, the sun shimmering on the Mediterranean as he had seen it from the heights about Naples.

But another note equally constant in Allston's work was the grave tone of mystery, which gives his paintings a quality different from that to be found in any of the older painters. This is the note of romanticism. He expresses it in his writing. "How vast a theatre is here laid open [by the contemplation of nature] where the physical eye is permitted to travel for millions and millions of miles, while that of the mind may, swifter than thought, follow out the journey from star to star, till it falls back upon itself with the humbling conviction that the measureless journey is there but begun! It is needless to dwell on the immeasurable mass of materials which a world like this may supply to the artist. The very thought of its vastness darkens into wonder."<sup>8</sup>

This magical hush of wonder in the "Diana in the Chase" attracted the attention of a young English poet who came to Rome a few months after Irving and was the foundation of another lifelong friendship. The poet was Samuel Taylor Coleridge. It is easy to see how the lyric twilight of the "Diana" would attract the man who had already written *The Ancient Mariner*, *Kubla Khan*, and the first part of *Christabel*.<sup>9</sup> The friendship of Coleridge was one of the great experiences of Allston's ripening years. Coleridge arrived at Rome in the last days of December,

8. *Lectures on Art and Poems*, p. 94.

9. When Allston held an exhibit at Bristol in 1814, Coleridge published a series of "Essays on the Fine Arts" in a Bristol journal to help his friend. Speaking of this picture, he said: "I am conscious that I look with a stronger and more pleasurable emotion at Mr. Allston's large landscape, in the spirit of Swiss scenery, from its having been the occasion of my first acquaintance with him in Rome. This may or may not be a compliment to him; but the true compliment to the picture was made by a lady of high rank and cultivated taste, who declared, in my hearing, that she never stood before that landscape without seeming to feel the breeze blow out of it upon her." These "Essays on the Fine Arts" are reprinted in Joseph Cottle's *Early Recollections of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* (2 vols.; London, 1837), II, 201-40.

1805, and remained there until May 18, 1806. Together he and Allston explored Rome and spent three weeks at Vigevano in the Sabine Hills. When Coleridge fled hastily back to England in fear of Napoleon, he wrote en route to Leghorn: "My dear Allston, somewhat from increasing age, but much more from calamity & intense pre-affections my heart is not open to more than kind good wishes in general. To you & to you alone since I have left England, I have felt more, and had I not known the Wordsworths, should have loved & esteemed you *first* and *most*, and as it is, next to them I love & honor you."<sup>10</sup> The affection was mutual. Allston, writing years later to Dunlap, confessed that "to no other man whom I have known, do I owe so much intellectually, as to Mr. Coleridge, with whom I became acquainted in Rome, and who has honored me with his friendship for more than five and twenty years. He used to call Rome the *silent* city; but I never could think of it as such, while with him; for, meet him when, or where I would, the fountain of his mind was never dry, but like the far-reaching aqueducts that once supplied this mistress of the world, its living streams seemed specially to flow for every classic ruin over which we wandered. And when I recall some of our walks under the pines of the Villa Borghese, I am almost tempted to dream that I once listened to Plato, in the groves of the Academy. It was there he taught me this golden rule: *never to judge of any work of art by its defects*; a rule as wise as benevolent; and one that while it has spared me much pain, has widened my sphere of pleasure."<sup>11</sup>

The record of this association is the portrait of Coleridge which Allston did in Rome in 1806, and, with this, we come to Allston's type of romantic portrait. Unlike almost all the other leading painters of his time in this country, Allston was not interested in portrait painting as a profession.<sup>12</sup> He painted portraits, to please himself, of members of his family or of people he was fond of and interested in; but he took no part in the busy

10. Manuscript owned by H. W. L. Dana.

11. Dunlap, *op. cit.*, p. 187.

12. Moses F. Sweetser says in his biography (*Allston*) that Allston practiced as a portrait painter in Boston during his second American period (1809-11), which creates a somewhat false impression. His portrait painting was confined to portraits of his relatives in the Channing and Flagg families and one of his classmate, Edmund Trowbridge Dana.

portrait-painting trade. His portraits either are painted to solve a pictorial problem (the self-portraits) or are expressions of interest and affection. As was natural, he had tried his hand at so universal a genre. Before leaving America he had experimented with the simple head, the miniature, the decorative rococo portrait, and the naturalistic study of character. But in the Louvre he discovered Titian's portraits, which he found absorbingly interesting works of art in a new way. The Louvre possessed then not only Titian's "Man with the Glove" and the "Portrait of an Unknown Man," which are still there, but others, like the "Ippolito de' Medici," which have since returned to their original homes. He found in them two qualities full of suggestion. The first was a monumental gravity of form, as unlike as possible to the decorative grace of the rococo portrait. Titian's way of seeing a man as a figure of vital and heroic calm, standing in strong light in a world of shadow, gave his portraits a solemn and mysterious dignity which appealed to Allston's love of the splendid and the heroic. And, studying Titian's portraits, he discovered that luminosity as well as monumental form was their secret. "The modern Italians," he said to Henry Greenough (and, he might have added, the French of the neoclassic school), "mix their pearl tints with the palette-knife (on the palette), which is death to all brilliancy of color. It makes mud of the tints at once. They no longer sparkle to the eye, but become flat as stale beer. By mingling them lightly with the brush, you make a neutral tint of ten times the force of one ground up with the knife, and if you were to take a magnifying glass and examine the tint you would find small particles of pure color which give great brilliancy. You must have observed the difference in lustre between silk woven of two sets of threads, one blue and the other red, cannot be matched by any plain silk dyed purple. The first has a luminous appearance like the human complexion. This luminousness is the grand characteristic of flesh. It is what Titian calls the 'luce di dentro,' or internal light. When I first heard that expression of Titian's it opened to me a world of light. It is common with painters to talk of the transparency of flesh; it is not transparent but luminous. When I was in Paris, a student, Hazlitt [author of *Conversations with Northcote*], was there

painting a copy from Titian. We were examining the texture of the color, and he remarked upon the singularly varied character of the tints. 'It looks,' said he, 'as if Titian had twiddled his colors.' I don't know whether this expression strikes you as it did me. To me it is very expressive, and first gave me the idea of catching up each of the three colors and merely twiddling them together instead of grinding them with the knife."<sup>13</sup>

His first essay to embody these new conceptions was the "Self Portrait" (Pl. XI), painted at Rome in 1805. It shows a greater concentration upon the manner than do succeeding portraits in which the style is less self-conscious. The low key of the palette, the use of glazes, the unity and concentration of light, the statuesque simplicity of pose—all are studied after Titian and are in striking contrast to the portrait painting he had seen in London. The eyes and hair are dark brown, the skin very pale. The contrast between the white linen and black coat is relieved by the purple of the neckcloth, by the blue lining of the coat, and by the jewelry—a sapphire set in pearls on the white shirt front and a gold key just visible on the vest at the bottom of the canvas. The originality of the canvas (and it is very original in the total impression) lies in the coolness of the tone—cool flesh tones, cool oyster grays of the background—and in the delicate romantic freshness of the vision.

This freshness is seen to even better advantage in the unfinished portrait of Coleridge (Pl. XII) done the following year. It is interesting to compare this with the portraits Goya painted in the same decade. John La Farge used to tell his students that all the colors on their palettes were only variations of one color, which was the prevailing color of their picture. This is a perfect description of the use of color Allston now achieved. The whole picture becomes a single sensation of light and color, within whose harmony the eye later picks out the blended notes. The cool silver flesh tone, the cool white, black, and gray of the costume and background, are varied only by the warm brown vertical band at the right. The head is brushed in very broadly. Separate tones like the cool rose of the lips and cheeks exist as part of the whole. One can hardly

13. Jared B. Flagg, *Washington Allston, Life and Letters*, pp. 185-86.

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regret that Coleridge's flight from Rome left this magnificent sketch incomplete. The luminosity, the inner vitality, the spiritual solitude of the dreaming head, and the vivid quality of first impression in a sketch combine to make this a remarkable image of the romantic poet. A decade later Allston was to paint Coleridge again and give his portrait a greater finish, but in eloquence he was not to surpass this study.

## *Chapter Eight*

### The Meaning of Form and Movement

THE city of Rome itself was also an experience upon which Allston, like so many other artists before and after him, sharpened his awareness of life and formed his conception of the powers of art. He came there during one of the intervals in her long history when the stream of life had been diverted elsewhere, leaving Rome a city of silent squares and empty streets, when vineyards and gardens filled the vacant spaces between the shrunken city and Belisarius' encircling wall. The plain of the Campagna outside the walls was almost as empty as the days of Aeneas. The Apennines and Alban Hills, looking down upon the figures of solitary shepherds and peasants' wagons drawn by the same slow oxen that were carved on the bas-reliefs in the Forum, seemed to say that the past was as real as the present and nature timeless. The remainder of Allston's life would show how deeply the love of that Roman gravity and silence, the brooding sense of the past which formed a patina upon every stone, and the grandeur of the timeless entered into his consciousness.

But to the artist Rome had in her art two other great impressions to offer. One was a quality which we understand easily—the quality of plastic form which lives in the architectonic ideal of Renaissance painting, where Cézanne found it to reassert it with such force that it has passed deeply into the theory (but not into the art) of today. The other was the second quality of Renaissance painting which Cézanne's followers rejected so vehemently that only now is it once again creeping into the interests of artists—the quality of narrative subject which, from Giotto to the close of the baroque period, Italian artists had felt so deeply



and explored with such splendor and eloquence. "The good painter," said Leonardo, "must paint principally two things, which are man and the ideas in man's mind. The first is easy, the second difficult, because they can only be expressed by means of gestures and the movements of the limbs." This kind of expression has some of its greatest examples at Rome in the works of Raphael and Michelangelo and the Roman baroque painters.

The power to make the movements of a body reveal the life of the figure that moves was first discovered for our tradition of painting by Giotto. But for the taste of 1800 its point of perfection appeared to be in the frescoes of Raphael and Michelangelo. Upon the example of Raphael, in particular, there had been built up an elaborate theory (long since forgotten) which is worth remembering only because it was embodied in books which, translated into English, were read by eighteenth-century American art students. The French academic theorists of the seventeenth century carried the study of gesture and facial expression to an extreme point of systematization. To read one of their books, one would suppose that expression was something almost mechanical: you put this expression on the face of one figure, that on another, and you thus create a tableau within your picture quite as independent of the feeling of the artist as if the figures were actors on the stage. This academic theory was of special interest to Americans because artists on this side of the Atlantic still had to form their conception of European painting chiefly from books. Allston studied this aspect of the language of art as carefully as he did color and deliberately rejected it. In the chapter called "Form" in the *Lectures on Art* he stated his conclusions, which are those we hold today. Expression is not a sum of attitudes and gestures which the artist can put into his figures methodically and calculatingly to make them self-existent like actors on a stage. It is a quality of the mind of the artist which animates all details and speaks through the harmony of the work of art. As he says in speaking of Raphael: "What particularly struck me in his works, was the *genuine life* (if I may so call it) that seemed, without impairing the distinctive character, to pervade them all; for even his humblest figures have a something, either in look, air, or gesture, akin

to the *venustas* of his own nature, as if, like living beings under the influence of a master spirit, they had partaken in spite of themselves a portion of the charm that swayed them. This power of infusing one's own life, as it were, into that which is feigned, appears to me the sole prerogative of genius."<sup>1</sup> This is the quality which, in literature, Poe described as "tone" in his review of Hawthorne's *Twice-told Tales*—the tone of one mind reaching another.

Yet at the same time Allston's long analysis of Raphael's "Death of Ananias" in the *Lectures on Art* leaves no doubt that he thought of the narrative power of the painter in precisely the same terms as did the Renaissance or baroque artist.<sup>2</sup> Leonardo, it may be remembered, argued for the superiority of painting over poetry because it could come nearer to representing our total experience of nature, including all that poetry can express as well as what can be seen and touched. And the foundation of that power of expression was control of form and movement. "With regard to preparatory studies," said Allston to a younger painter, "I should warmly recommend your devoting a portion of every day to drawing: for this reason, that if an artist does not acquire a correct design while young, he never will. . . . A painter may be blest with every gift of nature, but unless he has acquired the art of design he can never express himself. If you would not be tormented by a consciousness of having noble and beautiful conceptions to which you cannot give birth, you must give much of your time to drawing."<sup>3</sup>

Allston's immediate response to the Roman atmosphere and Renaissance painting found its most important expression in his "Jason." The drawing of this composition, many studies from life for the individual figures, and the huge unfinished canvas, fourteen by twenty feet in size, are all now in the Dana Collection (Pls. XIII and XIV). Coleridge says that Allston worked eighteen months on this composition.<sup>4</sup> On his departure from Rome he was obliged to leave the unfinished picture at

1. Quoted in Jared B. Flagg, *Washington Allston, Life and Letters*, p. 59.

2. *Ibid.*, pp. 90-92.

3. Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 197. Cf. our Pl. XVII.

4. S. T. Coleridge to Sir George Beaumont, 1811 (Earl Leslie Griggs [ed.], *Unpublished Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, II, 572).

Leghorn, rolled up in a packing case. It was eight years (1815) before he saw the case again in England, and by that time he had lost interest not only in the picture but in classical antiquity as a subject. "After that experiment I never tried another classic subject," he said long after. "The whole sympathy of my mind is with the Gothic and Romantic forms of art. Even the Greek architecture I have never admired, for what is it? You have the pediment everlastingly and for the sides of the building a mere parallelogram. It always looks like a barn if you step on one side. For my own part, I prefer the Roman architecture which is enriched by the arch and the dome."<sup>5</sup>

In spite of this later change of feeling, the "Jason" is of great interest. When one considers the effect of Rome upon Jacques Louis David, who came there twenty years before, or upon Ingres, who came the year after Allston's arrival; when one remembers that a decade after this Thomas Jefferson, who had never seen Rome, hoped that the Roman temples of the University of Virginia might be models for the architecture of the New World, it is interesting to see how the great dream of classical antiquity presented itself to an American artist actually in Rome. Rome gave to David a lifelong enthusiasm for sculptural form and a dream of heroic civic virtue. She gave to Ingres an ideal of Raphaellesque physical beauty and sweetness. Allston's "Jason" reminds us of neither of these but rather of Poussin in his gravest mood. The subject is the young Jason returning to demand his father's kingdom. The figures are grouped across the foreground in the square of an ancient city beneath an isolated statue. Masses of buildings on either side lead up to a temple against the sky. Although the subject is Greek, Allston saw the scene in terms of the sober grandeur of Rome and, significantly, conceived it not only in terms of sculptural form in deep space but also in the light-and-shadow of the coloristic tradition, as Poussin would have done, instead of in the outline and bas-relief style of the contemporary French neoclassicism. In his large unfinished picture the changes from the sketch show an even stronger departure from the linear, relief-like style of David and his

5. Allston's "Color Book," Dana Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society, among some notes on Allston's conversation by an unidentified hand.

followers. In one other respect also the "Jason" belongs to the Roman narrative tradition. The general tone of grandeur and repose in the "Jason" is animated by the movements of the figures which introduce slight but sensible variations of resolution, courage, doubt, anxiety, or simple grace. He had learned well the lesson of the Roman sixteenth century.

Allston discovered more than grandeur in antiquity. He was not concerned to find in it those models for the conduct of the just citizen that interested David, or the physical beauty that interested Ingres, but simply man in his general aspect of mental, moral, and physical wholeness. It was an aspect of the discovery of the timeless, which was one of the most important imaginative experiences of his years in Rome.

The other pictures which can be dated in his Italian period have the character of studies in the Venetian-baroque mode. The chief ones are the two spirited sketches formerly in the Charles Eliot Norton Collection, "David Playing before Saul" (Pl. XV) and "Moses and the Serpent"; the "Casket Scene" (from the *Merchant of Venice*), weak in detail but handsome in color and in organization of space; and the sketch of "Dido and Anna" (Pl. XVI). The influence of these Italian studies persisted throughout Allston's life both in details and in traits of composition. As he grew older, he seems to have worked less and less from models and more and more from within his own imagination. In his last period especially he liked to return to his early subjects and to work over them, introducing variations of pose or feeling. He always kept the drawings made at Rome and seems to have referred to them often. Thus, many of the works in his studio at the end of his life are akin to subjects he was first drawn to during these years. It is a characteristic of artists whose minds turn inward that memory becomes the great source and theme of their work. We only really savor our life, as Proust pointed out, when we relive it in memory.

In 1808 Allston left Leghorn on his way home. The Napoleonic Wars were approaching their climax, and American neutrality grew more and more precarious. Allston was convinced that the United States would soon be drawn in, and, as he wrote to Vanderlyn in Paris, he did not wish

to be caught on the Continent by hostilities. "Perhaps you will be surprised to find me so soon on my way home. The truth is, the situation of my country, as it now respects Europe, may well apprehend a loss of our neutrality. Perhaps I look too far. But a man who is expected home by his bride is not likely to risk so much as one who is so occupied by the whole sex together as to think of no one in particular. I therefore thought it prudent (though six months before it may be necessary), to cross the Atlantic while I was permitted. . . I hope your 'Marius' is safe arrived. My cases are all here, but they will not accompany me. I shall take only 'Cupid and Psyche' and the little 'Falstaff.' What queer times for a painter!"

The young man returned to America after seven years abroad with as extensive a knowledge of what painting had been and could be as the Old World then afforded. He had learned his art from the living tradition of the studios and from the great creators and masters of the language. But what had he learned?

Nineteenth-century academic painting was founded upon the neo-classic prejudice that color and light were minor and unimportant elements of painting; that only form counted. The academic notion of painting was summed up in Ingres's dictum that painting was drawing, to which color added only an agreeable ornament. Allston also had learned at Rome the importance of drawing and of form. But for him, summing up all other elements of good painting, and giving life and poetry to the whole, was color. The future of painting in the nineteenth century was with the painters who knew that.

This influence of the great coloristic style of baroque painting upon Allston may be compared to the influence of Elizabethan literature upon the New England romantic writers. As Matthiessen has recently emphasized, Emerson, Thoreau, Hawthorne, and Melville formed their sense of literary style by a study of Shakespeare, Spenser, Milton, Vaughan, Sir Thomas Browne, and the other English poets and prose writers of the seventeenth century.<sup>6</sup> The task of these New England

6. F. O. Matthiessen, *American Renaissance: Art and Expression in the Age of Emerson and Whitman* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1941).

authors, as they clearly realized, was new. Their world was different, their materials novel. But their understanding of what style meant, their conception of the force and melody that live in words, was formed by the richest and most splendid writing of the past. "How can the age be a bad one," asked Emerson in the second number of the *Dial*, "which gives me Plato and Paul and Plutarch, Saint Augustine, Spinoza, Chapman, Beaumont and Fletcher, Donne and Sir Thomas Browne, beside its own riches?" That taste, which mingled an enthusiasm for antiquity, the Christian tradition, and the seventeenth century, was characteristic of New England romanticism.

What the artists of a new land needed to learn most was to organize the raw materials of life into a decisive plastic expression. Here in America there was material enough for art, and intellect and curiosity enough. But merely to wish to produce art is not sufficient. There are subtle, difficult skills of expression to be mastered which are the inheritance from centuries of artistic discipline and accumulated experience. The artist in the America of 1800 was isolated from this experience and unsustained by its tradition. The danger was that his thoughts would be dispersed into vacancy or that in his search for a way of expression he might, in Allston's words, "waste life in guesses, and to guess at last that we have all our lives been guessing wrong."<sup>7</sup>

Emerson, as Matthiessen emphasizes, also knew how difficult it was to organize the impressions of life into an artistic form and how fruitless observation could be without the power to bring it into focus. "How many young geniuses we have known," he said, "and none but ourselves will ever hear of them for want in them of a little talent." He expressed his conviction that in our vast, empty land genius must find a concentrated expression by the reflection, "I think I have materials enough to serve my countrymen with thoughts and music, if only it was not scraps. But men do not want handfuls of gold dust, but ingots." Such concentrated power of statement was what the great artists of the baroque could teach. It was what Allston wished to learn from the old masters. "I have

7. *Lectures on Art and Poems*, p. 12. This happened all too frequently among artists of much talent in the nineteenth century. See the writer's article on the late romantic painter William Page in the *Art Quarterly*, I (1938), 91.

frequently been told by friends of yours, sir," he later said to a young painter, "that they were afraid you were running after the old masters. Now if that frightens them, *I would make every hair on their heads stand on end!* for you may depend upon it that you cannot go to better instructors for your art. From them you will learn the language of your art, and to see nature as they saw it. You will understand, of course, that I am not recommending you to imitate but to study them."<sup>8</sup>

All great art has a tradition. There is a popular tendency to think of art in terms of solitary geniuses. According to this notion, it is impossible to foresee the coming of the heroes and rebels of art. They simply appear from time to time, break all existing rules of art, draw upon no man or system of education but go their rebellious way, and leave behind them works which tower above the mediocrity of life. That is only a half-truth. Art, even in the purely spiritual activity of thought and imagination, is not wholly individual. No man creates great things out of himself alone. It is by giving form to what already exists formless in life about him, adding his personal gift of expression to the deepest experience of mankind, that the artist achieves true greatness. The various arts—which are the imaginative interpretation of experience—are part of the organic whole of life, which is a continuing process. Each of the arts is a language carried on by many men practicing it each in his own degree. Like a language, each art has its own history and structure. It is formed not only by the individual talents of a few outstanding men but by skills and attitudes of mind carried down by the profession.

Another factor in the life of an artist consists of the services which society asks the artist to render. This factor may operate positively or negatively. Artists sometimes have forgotten their people, proclaimed that they owed nothing to society, and broken away from the craft structure of the arts. On the other hand, society sometimes ceases to ask artists for their services. For example, we once kept hundreds of painters busy in this country supplying the demand for portraits. In the later nineteenth century we suddenly transferred this demand to photographers, with no small effect upon the profession of painting. In order to under-

8. Flagg, *op. cit.*, p. 197.

stand the arts as part of human society, one must ask: What services does society ask of the artist? What skill does he bring to his task? What imaginative power makes his work memorable?

In an active center of art, like Rome in the seventeenth century or Paris in the nineteenth, where all factors are present and the arts are flourishing, the young art student is caught up at the beginning of his career by the momentum of a vigorous professional life. All the artist has to do in such an environment is to discover his own individual way of seeing. In American painting we can realize what it meant for an artist to be born far outside this flowing stream of talents, skills, and ideas, in a society in which the profession of painting hardly existed. It was necessary for him, first, to discover that his art existed, then to learn what the life of an artist was, and, finally, to separate himself from the inartistic life about him. This often involved great resolution and effort. There are many cases, as every student of American art knows, in which this struggle exhausted the best energies of a life or left incurable spiritual wounds. In most instances it meant that a man came late to his own proper activity. It would not be surprising if the general development of style, under these circumstances, was a little slower than in the active center.

In some cases, however, the absence of an active professional tradition of the arts in America worked the other way. There have been exceptionally gifted American artists who, being forced by the lack of an existing style to think out for themselves the meaning and purpose of their art, have arrived at fundamental discoveries in advance of current European practice. Poe, for example, was such an artist in literature, and, as I have shown, Allston was in painting.

For the provincial artist there was a grave danger in having to look abroad two thousand miles to the European schools in order to learn his *métier*. The provincial artist is likely to be attracted by the novelties of form in foreign painting, which have the fascination of a technical assurance he does not himself possess. But the form of a work of art is the expression of the creative spirit, which produces it and gives it life. The provincial artist who imitates the form without having the inner



spirit of which the form is the organic expression falls into mannerism, which is the external imitation of a form without the animating spirit.

Form can be studied although it cannot be borrowed. The men of the early nineteenth century knew this. Allston, Emerson, Hawthorne, Thoreau—all spoke very explicitly about this problem. An artist, in their view, must study the great masterpieces of his profession and must set his standards for his own work by comparison with the greatest. When young art students came to Allston as an older man, he advised them to study only masterpieces. He advised Sophia Peabody (afterward the wife of Nathaniel Hawthorne) that “she ought to copy only masterpieces—nothing second rate.”<sup>9</sup> He wrote to Thomas Cole to “select his models from among the highest.”<sup>10</sup> And to Leslie he observed shrewdly that he rarely knew an artist to ignore the old masters who did not imitate his contemporaries under the impression he was going to nature.<sup>11</sup>

9. Julian Hawthorne, *Nathaniel Hawthorne and His Wife*, I, 65.

10. Quoted by Flagg, *op. cit.*, p. 205.

11. Letter of May 8, 1822 (quoted in *ibid.*, p. 173).

## *Chapter Nine*

Boston, 1808-11

**O**N THE twenty-third of April, 1808, Allston closed a letter from Leghorn to John Vanderlyn in Paris, "For 'tis past midnight, and I sail to-morrow for New York." He returned to spend three years in Boston, to marry Ann Channing, to whom he had been engaged all these years of travel and study, to paint perhaps fifteen pictures, and to write most of a volume of verse which was published at London and Boston in 1813.

Leonard Jarvis, a Harvard classmate, met Allston in Boston at this time and gives us a brief glimpse of him: "After we were graduated in 1800 I lost sight of him until he returned to this country in 1808. We met unexpectedly in Congress Street, Boston, and our greeting was most cordial and our former intimacy was at once renewed. He soon engaged a room in an old building where the Granite erections of Brattle Street now are, which had been previously occupied by Johnson the portrait painter. There he painted a portrait of your brother Edmund [Dana] for which he sat so often and so long that Welles, drolling, asked him one day whether he did not think such a sedentary life would be injurious to his health. Here too he painted a sea-piece while looking at which Stuart who was an incorrigible punster observed that he did not think anybody could beat Mr. Allston in making water, and also Catherine and Petruchio and The Poor Author's visit to the rich bookseller. He occupied this room at the time of his marriage in 1809 and here I found him on the morning after his nuptials at his usual hour engaged at his customary occupation. While he occupied this room, as I had a leisure interval between my transatlantic excursions, I passed

much of my time with him and found him the same unsophisticated, pure minded, artless, gentle being that I had known at college. He had the same oddities, the same tastes, and the only change I could discover was that his diffidence had increased with his years. I mean his diffidence in the company of ladies for of his own powers as an artist he never entertained a doubt. It was impossible that he should not be conscious of his extraordinary genius but he was without vanity or self conceit."<sup>1</sup>

The studio on Court Street (which is now part of Scollay Square) on the south side, between Brattle and Cornhill, was a historic spot. Smibert had set up a studio there eighty years before. This room had been used by a line of painters which included Copley, Trumbull, and Allston, making the spot, where today (1948) on the ground floor the Simpson Loan Company and Diamond Brokers and on the second floor the Hub Door Check Company, Locksmiths, do business, one which the student of American painting looks at with some emotion. Here, where so many portraits had been painted, Allston did the largest number of his own portraits. Most of these were of his new family: Ann Channing, his wife; William Ellery Channing, her brother; Lucy Ellery Channing, her mother (Pl. XXIV); Francis Dana Channing, who died of consumption on a sea voyage in 1810 (Pl. XVIII); and three other Channing portraits<sup>2</sup> which are not identified. But he also after his marriage visited his mother, Rachel Moore (Allston) Flagg, who was at New Haven with her son, his half-brother, Henry C. Flagg, then a student at Yale. On this visit he painted the admirable portrait of his mother (Pl. XXII) which now belongs to the Countess Szechenyi, as well as one of his half-brother. During the same period he painted the portrait mentioned by Jarvis of Edmund Trowbridge Dana, his classmate at Harvard, who afterward wrote the account of Allston in the *Encyclopaedia Americana*.<sup>3</sup> Never again was his interest so engaged in the study of personalities.

The portrait of his mother was considered by the artist himself to be one of his best. "I never seized a more characteristic expression—that of

1. Leonard Jarvis' notes on Allston, Dana Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society.

2. According to Moses F. Sweetser (*Allston*, p. 187).

3. Arthur Dexter, "The Fine Arts in Boston," in Justin Winsor, *Memorial History of Boston* (4 vols.; Boston, 1880-81), IV, 393 n.

a strong mind and ardent feelings.”<sup>4</sup> In style it is unlike the work of any other portrait painter of its time. Its monumental pose and deep chiaroscuro show the inspiration of Venetian portraiture. The light is concentrated on the head and hands and on a small portion only of these. It is deeper in tonality and more atmospheric than the classical portraits of Stuart. The head is painted with a fine, close unity of light that foreshadows Whistler’s portrait style in the refinement of its values.

The portrait of William Ellery Channing (Pl. XXIII), in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, is perhaps even more impressive because it deals with a more unusual human being. The intense, delicate head seems to float like a luminous apparition within the shadows. The effect is gained almost entirely by light. The color is of the simplest: black coat and white stock, warm flesh tone and dull-red background. It is an extraordinary record of this frail, powerful, luminous personality—mystic, orator, poet—in whom the ethical and literary intuitions of New England came to an early flowering. This may well be the portrait of which T. G. Appleton tells the story that Samuel Lawrence of London, seeing an Allston and a Stuart hanging side by side, said of the latter, “This man has accomplished much more perfectly than the other what he attempted; but Allston attempted what the other could not have conceived.”<sup>5</sup>

The personal tone in these portraits comes from the mood of reverie and from Allston’s romantic sense of the solitude of the human spirit. It is illuminating to compare this type of romantic portrait with the type created by Lawrence, which had an enormous influence not only in England but on the painting of the Continent. Lawrence also created a portrait of mood, but his aim was to catch the fleeting impression of an instant of life. He filled his canvas with flashing brush strokes and gleaming contrasts of lights and shadow in order to create movement, and in his faces he emphasized the expression of eyes and mouth where momentary expressions lurk. Allston worked in the opposite direction toward

4. R. H. Dana’s notes for a life of Allston, sheet 3, in the Dana Papers in the Massachusetts Historical Society.

5. “Portrait Painting and Gilbert Stuart,” *International Review*, X (1881), 64-71. Elizabeth Palmer Peabody in her *Reminiscences of Reverend William Ellery Channing* (p. 342) says that Allston later disliked this portrait and tried to destroy it. So far as can be discovered, the story is without confirmation.

the timeless, using an extreme of simplification, gravity, and stillness. The unity of the head as a globular form is emphasized by a delicate glow of light and by a deliberate subordination of all details to the pensive and brooding mood of the whole personality.

The same dreamlike mood and shadowy chiaroscuro mark in varying degree all the portraits of this period. Comparing them with the clear, calm daylight of Stuart's portraits, Allston's—"The Valentine" (Pl. XXI), based on a drawing of his wife; the "Ann Channing Allston," which was also known as "A Lady Reading"; the "Francis Dana Channing"; and the so-called "Mrs. Siddons" (which may be a portrait of a member of the Flagg family)—seem wrapped in visionary twilight.

An equally personal style and mood distinguish the "Coast Scene on the Mediterranean" (Pl. XIX), which was painted in 1811. As in all Allston's landscapes, nature is seen through the veil of memory. It is the coast of Tuscany or Latium. In the foreground are Italian peasants bargaining with the fishermen of their catch and a carter loading casks which seem to have come off a galley lying at the pier. Beyond are fishing vessels, a brig, and a lateen-rigged galley whose guns flash in the distance, as the sun sinks in splendor into the Tyrrhenian sea. The sky is the real hero of the piece. The sun raying light upward from the horizon and downward over the water, the rose and violet clouds spreading over a sky cool yellow below and cool blue above—all are painted with great coloristic subtlety. The harmony of the whole, created by a rich range of tone, a fine economy of color, and a delicate contrast of warm and cool, is most characteristic of Allston. The violet and rose tone of the clouds is carried down in charming transitions through the violet-brown sails to the warm brown ships and shore in the foreground, where some touches of red in the peasants' costumes give it a final fillip. The cool light of the sky is also carried down through the reflections on the ships into silvery whites of the peasants' clothes and of the white horse at the right. The mood is one of reverie which a hidden intensity of feeling makes somehow poignant and dramatic. It is interesting to compare Allston's mature art of light and aerial tone here with Turner's contemporary studies like the "Frosty Morning" and the "Sun Rising through

Vapor" in the National Gallery, London, and with the "Mill" in the Cook Collection, Richmond. There can be no question of influence, since Allston was out of touch with British painting after 1803, so that the similarity in their approach shows how strong was the urge in romantic painting to create an art of color and light.

Two other pictures, "Catherine and Petruchio" (from *The Taming of the Shrew*, present location not known) and "The Poor Author and the Rich Bookseller" (Pl. XX), were humorous pictures which are a reminder of Allston's versatility. They represent a phase of his painting which owes its inspiration to the English eighteenth-century tradition of humorous satire, to Hogarth and to Zoffany's theatrical subjects, prints of which must have been abundant in America during Allston's youth. It was not Allston's natural vein of feeling. The "Poor Author" lacks the gusto of Rowlandson or Cruikshank and the warmth of Wilkie or Leslie or Mount. Allston's genius was too meditative for this type of thing, which calls for a more dashing and spontaneous feeling. Yet it remains an extraordinarily well-painted interior, and technically it is probably the first notable genre picture in American painting. The spacious, airy interior is a delightful study of diffused light, and the vista through the inner room to the outdoors is painted with subtlety. The picture was purchased by Colonel Thomas Handasyd Perkins and thus remained in Boston, where its presence might explain how Henry Sargent was able to paint his two well-known interiors, "The Dinner Party" and "The Tea Party," now in the Boston Museum.

It will also serve to remind us that humorous satire was an important element of romantic feeling. Byron's early poems and Washington Irving's writings in this decade show how close an affinity existed between the romantic spirit and humor. One might say, indeed, that in New England belles-lettres of this time satire was the most active branch of poetry. John Trumbull, the best of the Hartford wits, had written lively Revolutionary rhymes which made him the first American poet to gain a national reputation. There was also the tradition of rustic humor practiced by Thomas Green Fessenden, author of the humorous genre poem "Jonathan's Courtship," whose biography was written by

no less a man than Nathaniel Hawthorne. Allston was part of this movement; indeed, his humorous poetry is probably now more palatable than his humorous painting. "The Two Painters," a burlesque narrative in the volume of verse that was written during these years, has passages that are still droll enough to be pleasant reading, and the mock romantic tale of "The Paint King" was well enough known to be quoted by Emerson in one of his lectures.<sup>6</sup>

As verse Allston's *The Sylphs of the Seasons, with Other Poems*, mostly written at this time, belongs to the period of transition between the eighteenth century and the new romantic style which followed Coleridge's *Christabel*. It is the book of an amateur rather than a professional poet, written, as Richard Henry Dana observed in the *North American Review*, in "moments of rest from his professional pursuits, at odd times, and with great rapidity." Its value for our time is that it throws an additional light on a more subtle and complex artistic personality than had ever before developed in this country, as its value for its own time was its quickening effect upon the nascent literary consciousness of the New England group. The most interesting work in the volume is the title poem, "The Sylphs of the Seasons." Professor H. W. L. Dana, in the admirable life (not yet published) of his great-great uncle, believes that this was the poem which Allston read before the Phi Beta Kappa Society of Harvard in 1810. Unfortunately, the only hearer who has left a description of this meeting of the society was the Reverend Dr. John Pierce, who says nothing about the subject of the poem but merely mentions wryly that it was fifty-five minutes long.<sup>7</sup>

6. Judge George F. Hoar, speaking of his childhood in Concord and of Emerson, says he heard Emerson lecture at the Lyceum. "In one of his lectures on Plato, he said that he turned everything to the use of philosophy, that 'wife, children and friends were all ground into paint'—alluding to Washington Allston's story of the Paint King who married a lovely maiden that he might make paint of the beautiful color of her cheeks. A worthy farmer's wife in the audience took this literally and left the room in high dudgeon. She said she thought Waldo Emerson might be in better business than holding up to the people of Concord the example of a wicked man who ground his wife and children into paint" (*Autobiography of Seventy Years* [2 vols.; New York, 1903], I, 61).

7. *Massachusetts Historical Society Proceedings*, IX (2d ser., 1894), 113. "The poem by Washington Alston [*sic*] was received with great emotion of pleasure by those who heard it. But, as he spoke very low, & I was in a lateral situation, I was in the number of those who did not hear enough to form a correct judgement of its worth. It was 55 minutes in length."

The significance of "The Sylphs of the Seasons" is that it describes the four seasons of the year and the influences of each upon the mind in terms of the imagination. It is, in other words, the romantic challenge to fresh sources of feeling opened to us by a new awareness of nature, which was to be stated again in bolder terms and to a wider audience by Emerson and Thoreau. The poet's work in the world, which is as important as utilitarian effort, says the Prologue, is to create a dream. Tired with mental travel, the poet falls asleep and experiences a vision, in which the four seasons appear as four damsels of fairy race. He is to choose one of them as his queen and rule "o'er all the varying year." But, before he makes his choice, each season describes her charms for the poet. Some of these descriptive passages were new and effective.

Then, wrapped in night, the scudding bark,  
 (That seemed, self poised amid the dark,  
     through upper air to leap,)  
 Beheld, from thy most azure height,  
 The rapid dolphin's azure light  
 Cleave, like a living meteor bright,  
     The darkness of the deep.

The poem shows an acute and sensitive observation of nature and a variety of mood. Sometimes the tone is that of intimate communion:

Or, brooding o'er some forest rill,  
 Fringed with the early daffodil  
     And quivering maiden-hair,  
 When thou hast marked the dusky bed,  
 With leaves and water-rust o'erspread,  
 That seemed an amber light to shed  
     On all was shadowed there.

Sometimes the mood is fanciful, rising to this impressive image:

Or, if the moon's effulgent form  
 The passing clouds of sudden storm  
     In quick succession veil,  
 Vast serpents now their shadows glide,  
 And coursing now the mountain's slide,  
 A band of giants huge they stride  
     O'er hill, and wood, and dale.



WASHINGTON ALLSTON

The Sylph of Autumn brings a mood of melancholy and of reverie  
on death and eternity, which linked with the ocean

And led thee, when the storm was o'er  
To hear the sullen ocean roar,  
By dreadful calm oppressed;  
Which still, though not a breeze was there,  
Its mountain billows heaved in air,  
As if a living thing it were,  
That strove in vain for rest.

The Sylph of Winter introduces the "love of terror," the "magic union"  
of fear and joy, and reverie on "the spirits of departed days." At last,  
without resolving the dreamer's choice, the vision ends abruptly:

When lo! there poured a flood of light  
So fiercely on my aching sight,  
I fell beneath the vision bright,  
And with the pain awoke.

The meter and the jingle of double and triple rhymes are unfortunate.  
The poem interests us not for its technique, which is amateur and often  
poor and thin, but for its revelation of a fresh and inventive sensibility,  
awake to nature in all its variety of moods, and for its deliberate state-  
ment of "a world within his mind" as the artist's goal.

It is no wonder, perhaps, that Anna Cabot Lowell, writing on August  
23, 1810, to Mrs. Anne Grant in Laggan, Scotland, and speaking of the  
excellence of painting in America, after mentioning West, Copley,  
Trumbull, and Stuart, added: "We have also a young man who bids fair  
to surpass them all; his genius is wonderful; he is a poet as well as a  
painter, but the pencil is his first and cherished love. Of course the other  
talent is less cultivated. He has visited England, France and Italy to  
improve himself. He returned to fill an engagement of the heart, but  
as we have few or no purchasers for such pictures as his he will soon go  
to England, where I hope the sunshine of patronage may await his  
labors. Few young men deserve it more."<sup>8</sup>

8. *Massachusetts Historical Society Proceedings*, XVIII (2d ser., 1904), 314.

## Biographical Summary

### Second English Period, 1811-18

1811. *Allston sailed in July from New York for England with Mrs. Allston and Samuel F. B. Morse. They reached Liverpool in twenty-six days and traveled to London by post chaise in a week, where they settled in lodgings at 49 London Street. Six months later Charles R. Leslie came to London and joined them. Allston's friendship with Coleridge was resumed, and, through him, he met Sir George Beaumont.*
1812. *Sir George Beaumont commissioned "The Angel Releasing St. Peter from Prison."*
1813. *"The Dead Man Revived" won a prize of two hundred guineas at the British Institution; The Sylphs of the Seasons was published first in London and afterward in Boston. Allston, with Mrs. Allston, Morse, and Leslie, made excursions to Hampton Court (April) and Oxford (May). In the summer Allston had a very serious illness, from which he never wholly recovered, and he was taken to Bristol for treatment by Dr. King of Clifton.*
1814. *Allston made the acquaintance of William Collins, the painter, and John Martin, the painter of architectural fantasies, who later did a "Belshazzar" (exhibited in 1821). An Allston exhibition was held at Bristol during the summer. In the autumn the Allstons returned to London and took a house on Tinney Street.*
1815. *On February 2 Mrs. Allston died. She was buried in the burial ground of St. Pancras Chapel, the only people present at the funeral being Allston, Leslie, Morse, and John Howard Payne. Allston then took lodgings with Leslie and Morse in Bucking-*

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*ham Place, Fitzroy Square. Shortly after, he was confirmed in the Episcopal church.*

1817. *In September Allston made a six-week visit to Paris in company with Leslie and William Collins.*
1818. *Allston was elected an honorary member of the American Academy of Fine Arts, New York City, in May. In September he returned to the United States.*

## *Chapter Ten*

### “Shapes of Delight, of Mystery, and Fear”

IN JULY, 1811, Allston sailed from New York to Liverpool on the ship “Lydia,” taking with him Mrs. Allston and the young Samuel F. B. Morse, son of the famous geographer-minister of Charleston, who was going to study painting in London. They reached Liverpool in twenty-six days and settled at the Liverpool Arms Hotel but were hurried from the city by the mayor’s orders. War was impending between the United States and Great Britain, and Americans were regarded with suspicion. They pushed on to London (two hundred miles) by post chaise in a week, although Mrs. Allston was in poor health. There the Allstons settled in lodgings at 49 London Street (now Maple Street, south of Fitzroy Square, between Fitzroy and Whitefield streets), in what was then the artists’ quarter of London. Morse found lodgings near by. Six months later a young art student from Philadelphia, Charles R. Leslie, came to London and shared Morse’s lodgings. The actual outbreak of hostilities in 1812 between the United States and England does not seem to have caused them any serious inconvenience except that their pride was often ruffled by the tone of the English press. They had a small circle of intimates—Morse, Leslie, Charles R. King, the Rhode Island artist who afterward painted for so many years in Washington; “Collard, the merry musician; and Lonsdale, a mediocre portrait painter who made excellent company” (Sweetser); and John Howard Payne, the actor and dramatist who was playing at Drury Lane Theatre. John Trumbull was also living in London, but Allston’s relations with him, though friendly, were not close. Coleridge, however, resumed the warm friendship begun at Rome and introduced Allston to Wordsworth,

Southey, and Sir George Beaumont. Among the English painters Allston's closest friend was the landscape and marine painter, William Collins, the father of the novelist, Wilkie Collins, whom he met in 1814. In the same year he also met John Martin, the painter of melodramatic fantasies, who was to paint another "Belshazzar" in 1821. In 1815 Washington Irving, at loose ends with the world, drifted over from Liverpool and joined their circle.

We have no statement from Allston himself of his reasons for going abroad a second time, but we can perhaps reconstruct them. He was now thirty-two years old. After ten years of painting in London, Paris, Rome, and Boston, he was an accomplished artist, confident of his powers but with his reputation still to establish. He had made friends among a group of writers who were at the creative center of romantic poetry in England, as we now see; but in 1811 the position of Wordsworth and Coleridge was not yet established either. Allston had a choice between Boston, where painting meant portraits, or some other place where he could have a better chance to work out his much more ambitious conceptions of art. His ideals of painting were personal and those of a painter, but they had a kinship, also, with those of a whole generation of young men, both painters and poets, now struggling for recognition.

For know there are two worlds of life and death:  
 One that which thou beholdest; but the other  
 Is underneath the grave, where do inhabit  
 The shadows of all forms that think and live,  
 Till death unite them and they part no more;  
 Dreams and the light imaginings of men,  
 And all that faith creates or love desires,  
 Terrible, strange, sublime and beauteous shapes.

In the words of Earth's reply to Prometheus' question about the nature of things, we catch sight of one of the powerful forces which moved men to create what we now call romantic art. A generation of war and revolution, beginning in America, spreading to France, and thence sweeping over the civilized world, had shattered the old conventions of art. The imaginations of these young men, looking out on the devastation of a

Europe struggling to free itself from Napoleon, discerned within themselves "terrible, strange, sublime, and beauteous shapes" which faith might create or love desire in this tragic but hopeful world. Could life achieve these adventurous possibilities? Could the artist catch those shadowy, dramatic images and give them permanence in the enduring forms of art?

Coleridge, speaking of the discussions which led to the publication of the *Lyrical Ballads*, gives us with remarkable clarity the program of the romantic exploration of life. "During the first years that Mr. Wordsworth and I were neighbors," he says in the *Biographia literaria*, "our conversation turned frequently on the two cardinal points of poetry, the power of exciting the sympathy of the reader by a faithful adherence to the truth of nature, and the power of giving the interest of novelty by the modifying colours of imagination. . . . The thought suggested itself (to which of us I do not recollect) that a series of poems might be composed of the two sorts. In the one, the incidents and agents were to be, in part at least, supernatural; and the excellence aimed at was to consist in the interesting of the affections by the dramatic truth of such emotions as would naturally accompany such situations, supposing them real. . . . For the second class, subjects were to be chosen from ordinary life; the characters and incidents were to be such as will be found in every village and its vicinity where there is a meditative and feeling mind to seek after them, or to notice them when they present themselves.

"In this idea originated the plan of the 'Lyrical Ballads'; in which it was agreed that my endeavours should be directed to persons and characters supernatural, or at least romantic; yet so as to transfer from our inward nature a human interest and a semblance of truth sufficient to procure for these shadows of imagination that willing suspension of disbelief for the moment, which constitutes poetic faith. Mr. Wordsworth, on the other hand, was to propose to himself as his object, to give the charm of novelty to things of every day, and to excite a feeling analogous to the supernatural, by awakening the mind's attention from the lethargy of custom, and directing it to the loveliness and the wonders of the world before us; an inexhaustible treasure, but for which, in consequence of

the film of familiarity and selfish solicitude, we have eyes, yet see not, ears that hear not, and hearts that neither feel nor understand."

This was the dual nature of romantic inspiration—romantic realism which turned to the world without and romantic idealism which turned toward the world within. It is evident that, for Coleridge as for Shelley, the inner world presented itself in the guise of the marvelous. The character of the first generation of romantic poetry is well known. But we have in general a less distinct notion of the painters of that generation, who were equally haunted by visions of the supernatural, the tragic, and the fabulous. Every country which was active in this stage of romantic art had painters of this kind—not only Allston but Blake and Prud'hon, Cornelius and Rethel, and the youthful Delacroix, who initiated French romantic painting with "The Bark of Dante" and established it with "The Massacre of Chios" and "The Death of Sardanapalus." The "shapes of delight, of mystery, and fear, passing along before a dusky space," which Keats, in the vision of the Charioteer, saw as the meaning of poetry ("Sleep and Poetry," 1817) were the visions of his generation.

These interests had appeared in painting in the later eighteenth century and developed slowly. One finds them first in the melodramas of West and Fuseli. West's small study for the "Death on the Pale Horse" (now in the Philadelphia Museum), which he had just done when Allston first arrived in London, is not only one of his best works but an example of the type of romantic subject in which the coming generation was to be most interested. West had brought the idea of a narrative form of painting to England at a time when, in spite of the influence of Sir Joshua Reynolds, the native English art was looked down upon. He owed his great standing there to the fact that the English connoisseurs recognized his work as belonging, in spite of certain obvious faults, to the type of narrative they admired in Italian art. He has failed to hold his reputation in the light of history, but the fact that Italian Renaissance and baroque narrative paintings continue to be admired is proof that West's failure came from his own defects rather than (as is often assumed) from the fact that painting cannot do what he tried to do. Yet he was by no means a negligible painter. Why does he leave us cold?

He could draw the human figure skilfully, but he could not make its movement express states of feeling. Canova said of him that he grouped models in costume instead of composing. As the result of his want of expressive movement, his work lacks personal tone. Neither had he really grasped the expressive use of light and color, using them in a decorative or theatrical way only. To express the intense, violent, and tragic moods of romanticism, painting had to be given a more eloquent and moving style. This was where Allston was to surpass West, for he not only mastered significant movement but saw the expressive nature of the movement of light, the resonance of tone, and the radiance of color.

Allston's first ambitious dramatic narrative, the "Jason," painted in Rome, had been more architectonic than dramatic or mysterious. In it he paid a last tribute to the dream of classical antiquity whose power over the imagination of that age is almost impossible for us to comprehend. "At school and at college," wrote Allston's friend Hillard, the president of Harvard, "the great vision of Rome broods over the mind with a power which is never suspended or disputed: her great men, her beautiful legends, her history, the height to which she rose, and the depth to which she fell,—these make up one half of a student's ideal world."<sup>1</sup> Allston had discovered in antiquity a majestic serenity, a mood of timeless grandeur and repose, which was one of the most important elements in his imaginative life. At the same time as the "Jason" he began to work upon another theme inspired by antiquity—that of *delight*, or grace, in "Dido and Anna" and probably in the lost picture of "Cupid and Psyche." But even in Rome he was drawn away from Plutarch and Vergil to choose from the Bible a subject such as "David Playing before Saul."

These tentative explorations had been interrupted by Allston's return to America in 1808. When he came back to London in 1811 and took up the narrative type of painting again during the winter of 1811-12, although he still continued to work upon "shapes of delight," his main interest had turned toward themes of "mystery and fear."

"The Dead Man Revived by Touching the Bones of the Prophet Elisha" (Pl. XXV) was his first major effort to paint a subject in which

1. George Stillman Hillard, *Six Months in Italy* (Boston, 1854), p. 560.



the human spirit labors under profound inner excitement caused by an incident on the border between the known and the unknown. The story is told tersely in the second Book of Kings (13:20-21): "And Elisha died, and they buried him. And the bands of the Moabites invaded the land at the coming in of the year. And it came to pass as they were burying a man, that, behold, they spied a band of men; and they cast the man into the sepulchre of Elisha: and when the man was let down, and touched the bones of Elisha, he revived and stood up on his feet." Brief as the story is, it contains two episodes of different character: the first is a purely human moment of alarm as the funeral party of Israelites caught sight of a marauding band and hurried to deposit the dead body in the nearest tomb; the second is the moment of terror at the unexplainable when the dead man awoke to life at the touch of the old bones lying in the tomb. Allston chose the latter as his subject. His interest was aroused by Sebastiano del Piombo's "Resurrection of Lazarus," the famous picture painted in rivalry with Raphael's "Transfiguration," which had been a sensation in the London world of art since Angerstein acquired it for thirty-five hundred guineas at the sale of the Orleans collection in 1798.<sup>2</sup> Both in scale and in subject "The Dead Man Revived" aims boldly to rival the monumental and expressive quality of Sebastiano's great masterpiece of the Roman-Venetian Renaissance.

The composition was very carefully worked out in preliminary sketches both in color and in clay models. Allston made not only a sketch of the whole composition but a small study in clay of the dead man and a life-size head in clay. None of these, unfortunately, seem to have survived. Coleridge wrote to Sir George Beaumont on December 7, 1811: "Allston is hard at work on a large Scripture piece—the dead man recalled to life by touching the bones of the Prophet. He models every figure. Dawe,<sup>3</sup> who was delighted with the *Cupid and Psyche*, seemed greatly astonished at the facility and exquisiteness with which Allston

2. Haydon ten years later (1821-23) painted the "Resurrection of Lazarus" in direct challenge to Sebastiano (cf. A. C. Sewter, "A Revaluation of Haydon," *Art Quarterly*, V [1942], 323).

3. George Dawe, R.A., a sculptor who made a life-mask of Coleridge in this same year and exhibited a bust of him at the Royal Academy in 1812.

modeled. Canova at Rome expressed himself to me in very warm terms of admiration on the same subject."

This ambitious composition is one of Allston's most successful examples of significant movement—movement that reveals the life of the figure which moves—especially in the remarkable figure of the dead man stirring with life. The movement spreads outward in a wave of changing expressions. The bearers feel the dead man begin to move in their hands, and they start back in terror. Behind them the dead man's wife sinks fainting with shock and is supported by her daughter.<sup>4</sup> In the background the guards, on the lookout for the Moabites, have not yet been reached by the wave of emotion rolling out from the foreground. In its present state the picture is almost too dirty to be seen; but one can discern that Allston used in it, perhaps for the first time with real success, the re-echoed colors which were his first style of monumental color. It was originally suggested, undoubtedly, by the Venetian pictures he had studied in the Louvre; but Allston gave it a personal quality of his own. The dead man is wound in a yellow sheet and lifts a white cloth from his head; the bearer at the left wears a red garment, the bearer at the right, blue. These four primary colors are the main color notes which are re-echoed in diminishing combinations through the other figures until they melt into the shadows toward the rear. The colors are suffused in a shadowy atmosphere which gives a rich tonal background for the harmonic chord of four strong notes.

While Allston was working on "The Dead Man Revived," Benjamin West came to the studio and looked at the picture. "Why, sir," he said, this reminds me of the fifteenth century; you have been studying in the highest school of art. There are eyes in this country that will be able to see so much excellence."<sup>5</sup> The painting won a prize of two hundred guineas at the British Institution in 1813. In view of the fact that Allston was the citizen of a country then at war with England, the award is a tribute both to the effect produced by the picture and to the magnanimity

4. Allston said in a letter to John F. Cogdell, July 1, 1826, in answer to a criticism, that if he were to do the subject again, he would omit these two figures.

5. Moses F. Sweetser, *Allston*, pp. 71-72.

of the British connoisseurs. This success immediately had its effect in America. As soon as the war was over, Thomas Sully and James McMurtrie exerted themselves in Philadelphia to raise thirty-five hundred dollars in order to purchase the picture for the newly organized Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, where it has hung since 1816. The purchase was an energetic and courageous gesture, which would probably not have been possible without the previous recognition in London. Allston was then a new name to American ears. When Dunlap saw the picture in 1819, he knew Allston only by hearsay; but, after comparing it with West's "Christ Healing the Sick" in the Philadelphia Hospital (which had come over in the same year), he noted in his diary that Allston was really the better painter of the two.<sup>6</sup>

As Allston's contemporaries observed, the figure of the dead man is the most expressive in the composition. He is, indeed, more convincing than Sebastiano's Lazarus. The other figures are less convincing than the subsidiary ones in the older picture, but the dead man is one of Allston's masterpieces of the quality of significant movement. Such movement, from its introduction into Florentine painting by Giotto to the latter part of the nineteenth century, was more widely used as a form of expression than the architectonic or symphonic movement of stylized art. Donatello, Masaccio, Rubens, and Daumier were all masters of significant movement. Since Post-Impressionism the use or even the conception of significant movement has almost disappeared,<sup>7</sup> so that it is worth while to quote Allston's own description of his composition:

"The sepulchre of Elisha is supposed to be a cavern among the mountains, such places, in those early days, being used for the internment of the dead. In the foreground is the man at the moment of reanimation, in which the artist has attempted, both in the action and color, to express the gradual recoiling of life upon death. Behind him, in a dark recess,

6. William Dunlap, *Diary of William Dunlap, 1766-1839* (3 vols.; New York: New York Historical Society, 1931), II, 475.

7. Mural painting in America today is largely an unconscious mingling of two forms, architectonic and significant movement. Painters have returned to the representative, narrative problems of the one, while drawing the human figure in the purely architectonic manner of the other; and from this contradiction, caused by a failure to think out the principles involved, has come some of the worst painting in history.

are the bones of the prophet, the skull of which is peculiarized by a preternatural light. At his head and feet are two slaves, bearers of the body, the ropes still in their hands, by which they have let it down, indicating the act that moment performed; the emotion attempted in the figure at the feet is that of astonishment and fear, modified by doubt, as if still requiring further confirmation of the miracle before him; while in the figure at the head, is that of unqualified, immovable terror. In the most prominent group above is a soldier in the act of rushing from the scene. The violent and terrified action of this figure was chosen to illustrate the miracle by the contrast which it exhibits to that habitual firmness supposed to belong to the military character, showing his emotion to proceed from no mortal cause. The figure grasping the soldier's arm, and pressing forward to look at the body, is expressive of terror overcome by curiosity. The group on the left, or rather behind the soldier, is composed of two men of two different ages, earnestly listening to the explanation of a priest, who is directing their thoughts to heaven as the source of the miraculous change; the boy clinging to the young man is too young to comprehend the nature of the miracle, but like children of his age, unconsciously partakes of the general impulse. The group on the right forms an episode consisting of the wife and daughter of the reviving man. The wife, unable to withstand the conflicting emotions of the past and present, has fainted; and whatever joy and astonishment may have been excited in the daughter by the sudden revival of her father is wholly absorbed in distress and solicitude for her mother. The young man with outstretched arms, actuated by impulse (not motive), announces to the wife by a sudden exclamation the revival of her husband: the other youth, of a mild and devotional character, is still in the attitude of one conversing—the conversation being abruptly broken off by his impetuous companion. The sentinels in the distance, at the entrance of the cavern, mark the depth of the picture and indicate the alarm which had occasioned this tumultuary burial.”<sup>8</sup>

This is a very good description of the artistic form which goes back originally to Giotto. It means, succinctly, that human figures in a com-

8. Quoted by Jared B. Flagg, *Washington Allston, Life and Letters*, pp. 99–100.

position ought to have an inner emotional relationship to one another as well as a physical or plastic arrangement. If Allston's success was uneven, the picture was nonetheless a notable accomplishment, the most eloquent and effective *monumental* painting—other than a portrait group—yet produced by an American painter.

In 1812 Allston began work on another subject on the border line between human life and the unexplainable. "The Angel Releasing St. Peter from Prison" (Pl. XXVIII) was commissioned by Sir George Beaumont, who had admired the sketch for "The Dead Man Revived" in Allston's studio and commissioned a picture for the new church near his country place at Ashby de la Zouch. The composition depends more upon contrast of light and dark and upon the warm resonance of *chiaroscuro* than upon re-echoed colors. Perhaps the change in Allston's use of color and light meant that he had begun to study the little picture of "Jacob's Dream" by Rembrandt in the Dulwich Gallery. A sonnet by Allston on this picture expresses his admiration for the quality of mystery in Rembrandt's work and for his use of *chiaroscuro* to shadow forth "thoughts and things from other worlds."<sup>8a</sup> With "The Angel Releasing St. Peter" the dramatic resonance of light and shadow began to play an increasing part in his own pictures.

The small preliminary sketch for "The Angel Releasing St. Peter" (Pl. XXVII), in the possession of the Countess Szechenyi, is one of the best preserved of Allston's narrative compositions. The figure of the wondering, frightened Peter seems more convincing than in the large final version; the radiance of the light and the somber mystery of the shadows are more effective. Flagg says that the head of the angel is a portrait of Mrs. Allston. The suggestion seems possible when one looks at the sketch, but in the life-sized completed picture the angel shows a very strong influence of the cold and regular *beau ideal* of the "Apollo Belvedere." One remembers the movement of the half-reclining saint, the color, light, and grandeur of scale with more pleasure than the angel.

In 1813 came the two sketches of another miraculous subject, "Christ

8a. This wonderful little picture, for generations believed to be Rembrandt's work, was cleaned in 1947 and revealed the signature of his pupil, Aert de Gelder.

Healing the Sick" (Pl. XXIX). The first study in line and sepia wash has an economy and force lacking in the color study, which is muddy and not up to the standard of Allston's color, perhaps because he became discouraged with the idea and dropped it. The composition is nevertheless finely conceived. The miraculous force that restores health to the sick is contained in the pyramidal group formed by the quiet figure of Christ and the figures of the sick and suppliant below him in the foreground. Around this center of miraculous energy stand a half-circle of men and women through whose figures run reaction to the miracle in a series of moods ranging all the way from wonder, love, hope, excitement, and reverent discussion to angry recrimination, awe, and fear. Behind are the buildings of a city and a shadowy sweep of mountain, sky, and sea. Allston never began a large picture from these sketches. He was so dissatisfied with the figure of Christ that he abandoned the subject and resolved never again to try to visualize the person of the Savior.

But in the excitement of these great pictures, in which were centered all his ambitions as an artist as well as his hopes of establishing a reputation, Allston had been drawing on his reserves of strength. He worked incessantly, going without a midday meal, and forcing himself to the limit of his energy. Early in 1813 he seems to have felt the need for rest and went for a trip to Hampton Court, taking with him Mrs. Allston and his two pupils, Leslie and Morse. Later in the spring the four went on a ten-day trip to Windsor, Oxford, and Blenheim. But in the summer his health broke down completely. He suffered extreme pain from a stomach ailment, and, when he showed no improvement, his physician recommended what was then the inevitable expedient, a change of air. His uncle, Mr. Vanderhorst, American consul at Bristol, had often invited him to visit that neighborhood, and so the patient set off, accompanied by Mrs. Allston, Morse, and Leslie, to travel by easy stages to Clifton. At Salt Hill, near Windsor, he became so ill that Morse hurried back to notify Coleridge, who came immediately from London with the doctor; both remained there until the sick man was well enough to continue his journey. As the inn was crowded, Leslie shared a double-bedded room with Coleridge. "We were kept up late," said Leslie in his auto-

biography, "in consequence of the critical condition of Allston, and, when we retired, Coleridge seeing a copy of 'Knickerbocker's History of New York' (which I had brought with me) laying on the table, took it up and began reading. I went to bed, and I think he must have sat up the greater part of the night, for the next day I found he had nearly got through Knickerbocker."<sup>9</sup> It was Coleridge's introduction to Washington Irving.

After a few days the Allston party went on to Bristol, or rather to its suburb of Clifton, where Dr. King, a surgeon recommended by Southey, succeeded in curing the invalid. "During the gradual cure of his painful disorder," says Leslie, "he was, however, subject to a great deal of annoyance from his uncle, Mr. Vanderhorst . . . never, perhaps, did one kind-hearted man torment another more. Among one or two other prejudices, Mr. Vanderhorst cherished an inveterate animosity against doctors. 'Don't let one of those rascals enter your door,' was the burthen of his first visit to his suffering nephew. 'Follow my advice, live well, and trust to the air of Clifton. You see how well I am'—he had only the gout—and how healthy all my family are, and this is because we never let a doctor come near us.' At the very moment in which this advice was inflicted on the patient, we were expecting the arrival of Mr. King. Mr. Vanderhorst luckily left before the doctor came; but as the latter visited Allston regularly twice a day, and Mr. Vanderhorst or one of his family called often, our apprehensions of a collision, or at least a discovery of what was going on, were unceasing. In the meantime Allston's gradual recovery was evident, and Mr. Vanderhorst took the whole credit of it to himself."<sup>10</sup> This unfortunate sickness left a permanent mark upon Allston's health. When he returned to London, says his biographer Flagg, his physician told him he would never be entirely well again.<sup>11</sup> He remarked to a friend, some thirty years after this, that, while he had been well enough since, he had never felt buoyant health.

He returned to London to finish and exhibit "The Dead Man Re-

9. Charles Robert Leslie, *Autobiographical Recollections: Edited with a Prefatory Essay on Leslie as an Artist and Selections from His Correspondence*, by Tom Taylor, p. 23.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 24.

11. *Op. cit.*, p. 96.

vived," and the next year (1814) was again one of the great activity. He painted one figural subject, "A Mother Watching Her Sleeping Child" (Mrs. John Briggs Potter Collection) (Pl. XXXII), several portraits, and two large landscapes. The "Mother and Child" belongs to the theme of grace and repose which ran as an undercurrent through these years. It was begun as a "Virgin and Child," but Allston felt dissatisfied with his realization of this subject and changed the title to the less pretentious one. It is a small picture but with an admirable monumental largeness of drawing and rich, simple color.

In the late spring the Allstons returned to Bristol and stayed there until October. He hired a hall and held an exhibition of his pictures. Although Coleridge wrote a series of essays on the fine arts for Felix Farley's *Bristol Journal* to support the exhibit, no one bought except his uncle, Mr. Vanderhorst, who acquired two landscapes. Morse wrote to his parents (October 11, 1814) that "Mr. and Mrs. Allston . . . set out for London in a few days after some months' *unsuccessful* (between ourselves) residence here. All public feeling is absorbed in one object, the *conquest of the United States*; no time to encourage an artist, especially an American artist." Coleridge's essays on the fine arts, reprinted as an appendix in Cottle's *Early Recollections of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* (2 vols.; London, 1837), are an interesting contrast to Allston's theory of art advanced in his *Lectures*. Coleridge, a very advanced critic of literature, was one of the earliest to discuss poetic form in terms of expression; but he saw in painting only the possibilities of decorative or compositional harmony. Allston's conception of expression in the plastic arts is evidently his own, not an echo of his friend.

In 1814 also Allston did his last considerable group of portraits, continuing in the style he had developed at Boston. His portrait of Benjamin West (Pl. XXXI), now in the Boston Athenaeum, was painted in this year. It is significant that, once he had achieved the intense brooding life of the head, his interest was satisfied. The chair and draperies were not added until twenty-three years later, when, desiring to exhibit the picture at the Athenaeum, he added the accessories as a concession to popular notions of what a portrait should be. The landscape painter, Inness, said



of this canvas, "How real seems that portrait alongside of Stuart's pink fancy of Washington! and what a piece of bosh, by contrast, is the 'Portrait of Benjamin West, Esq. (I believe he wasn't Sir'd), President of the Royal Academy,' by Sir Thomas Lawrence."<sup>12</sup>

Allston himself felt that some of his best portraits were done at Bristol in 1814 among the group of friends he had formed there. The second portrait of Coleridge (Pl. XXX), now in the National Portrait Gallery, London, was painted there for Mr. Josiah Wade. He also painted portraits of Dr. King of Clifton, the physician who had saved his life during the previous year, and of Mrs. King. Sweetser, in his biography of Allston, says that he likewise painted a portrait of Robert Southey. There is no other reference to such a portrait, but there is little doubt that he was acquainted with Coleridge's brother-in-law. In that literary curiosity, *A Vision of Judgment*, when Southey describes the "Young Spirits" of the Georgian age, he speaks of

... he who, returning  
 Rich in praise to his native shores, hath left a remembrance  
 Long to be honor'd and loved on the banks of Thames and of Tiber;  
 So may America, prizing in time the worth she possesses  
 Give to that hand free scope, and boast hereafter of Allston.

In the portrait of Coleridge, Allston used an imaginative setting to heighten the expression of the figure. The poet seems to be in a huge, dark room opening into a perspective of dimly seen Gothic vaults, in which a statue stands frowning in a niche. The grave, brooding figure against its mysterious setting is a memorable image of the poet's solitary, reflective spirit. Allston described it as a portrait of Coleridge in repose; for, as he said, no one could paint the effect the poet produced when talking.

When the portrait was painted, Coleridge was at the bottom of his pit of despair. Even his long-suffering brother-in-law, Southey, had lost faith in him. Two of his letters show how much the morbid atmosphere of self-pity, into which Coleridge's letters so often fell, was accentuated at this time. In a letter of May 15, 1814, to John Morgan, he begins by say-

12. Quoted by Sweetser, *op. cit.*, p. 73.

ing that he was in such a direful state that it had been necessary to remove his razors and penknife from the room and to have someone sleep beside his bed. "Allston," he went on, "has altogether forgot me: but I have not forgot him,—but I am an Englishman and he is an American! I was in my bitterest affliction glad to learn that his picture had been noticed, however unworthily and by such a scurvy set of judges. I intreated Bird to call on him and intreat him to write me, tho' but two lines—But I fear Allston, tho' the very best and prime, is an American."<sup>13</sup> Allston's life-long inability to write letters was no doubt the cause of this outburst. Coleridge, however, was exasperated by the war between England and America, and he suspected Mrs. Allston of coming between them. On July 7 he wrote to Morgan: "The same game in Bristol as in London—A. can visit *me*; but his own House and Feelings belong as exclusive Property to his 'Countrymen,' as he called one of the Beasts last night: when to Wade's great Delight I gave him a justly complimentary, but from that very cause a most sure reproof. 'Countryman?' (said I) 'Live the ages of Methusalem, and you *may* have a right to say *that*, Allston.—At present, either the World is your Country, and England with all its faults your *home*, inasmuch as it contains the largest number of those who are capable of feeling your Fame before the idle Many, (the same in *kind* in all places but better (even these?), in *degree here*, than in any other part of the world) have learnt to give you Reputation, or you are morally not worthy of your high Gifts, which as a Painter give you praeternational Privilege, even beyond the greatest Poet, by the universality of *your* Language: and you prefer the accident of Place, naked *Place*, enriched by any of the associations of Law, Religion or intellectual *Fountaincy*, to the essential grandeur of God in Man.' I said it loftily, and tho' mildly yet not without perceptible Indignation: and it faintly tinged his cheeks, tho' the increased yellow was the predominate Hue. Good Heavens! that such a man with such a Heart and such Genius should be—not *an* American, but downright *American*, and I do believe, nine parts in ten owing to the little Hydatid [Mrs. Allston]. O that (If only his Health could have been preserved) instead of being a good little

13. Earl Leslie Griggs (ed.), *Unpublished Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, II, 112–14.

Hydatid she had been an absolute Sarah Mary Edith Eliza—*Fricker* (Christ! what a name for Coleridge to be transferred to!) with all the discontent, and miserableness of the Angel of the Race, self-nibbling Martha!—then perhaps he might have hated her and been a fine fellow.”<sup>14</sup>

Coleridge's wish that Mrs. Allston might be as disagreeable as his own wife was the supreme expression of the irritation produced between the two friends by the war. But, in spite of such jars, their friendship remained close and firm. It seems a commentary upon what has happened to the world in the last hundred years that Allston could live, work, exhibit pictures, and even win prizes in England during the war between the two countries yet suffer nothing worse than an occasional reproach like this.

In spite of the lack of success of the Bristol exhibition and his illness, Allston seems to have felt that, with the award of 1813 and the support of Coleridge and Sir George Beaumont, the future appeared quite hopeful. At all events, having until now lived in lodgings, the Allstons on their return to London took a house on Tinney Street and furnished it. But a second great shock awaited him. His own health was now better, but his wife's was gravely impaired by the strain of caring for him. Almost immediately after entering the new house, she became ill and within two or three days died, on February 2, 1815. She was buried in the burying ground of St. Pancras Chapel, the only people present at the funeral being her husband, his pupils, Leslie and Morse, and John Howard Payne. Allston left the new house and took lodgings in Buckingham Place, northwest of Fitzroy Square, near Leslie and Morse and next door to the sculptor Flaxman. He suffered from terrible depression. What seemed to him diabolical thoughts haunted him. He finally sent Leslie to consult Coleridge at Highgate, who gave him sound advice. "Allston should say to himself, '*Nothing is me but my will.* These thoughts, therefore, that force themselves on my mind, are no part of *me*, and there can be no guilt in them.' If he will make a strong effort to become indifferent to their recurrence, they will either cease, or cease

14. *Ibid.*, pp. 121-22.

to trouble him." It was at this time that Allston followed his friend Coleridge into the Episcopal church, thus affording another instance of the return to traditional Christianity after the deism of the eighteenth century—a return whose significance in the intellectual life of romanticism is much greater than is usually realized.

It is not my purpose to tell the story of the friendship between Allston and Coleridge, but I must quote part of the long and affectionate letter of October 25, 1815, written by Coleridge in condolence for Mrs. Allston's death and in regret for the hostility between Britain and America. In closing, he said: "I can but pour forth two earnest wishes. First that equal to the best in composition, and I most firmly believe superior in the charm of colouring, you would command your genius to the universally intelligible of your *παγγλώσσης τέχνης*—expression!—Second, that you never for any length of time absent yourself from nature, and the communion with nature: for to you alone of all contemporary artists does it seem to have been given to know what nature is—not the dead shapes, the outward *Letter* but the life of nature revealing itself to the *Phaenomenon*, or rather attempting to reveal itself. Now the power of producing the true ideals is no other, in my belief, than to learn the will from the deed, and then to take the will for the deed. The great artist does what nature would do, if only the disturbing forces were abstracted."<sup>15</sup>

The first picture painted in 1815 after the death of his wife was a return to the picaresque subject matter of his youth, "Donna Mencia in the Robber's Cavern" (Pl. XXXIII) from *Gil Blas*, a picture now in the M. and M. Karolik Collection of the Boston Museum. Oliver Wendell Holmes, who saw it in the Allston exhibition of 1839, said that it possessed great depth and richness of color and represented "the realization by the artist, in the maturity of his powers, of some of the conceptions of banditti adventurers for which he has recorded his early fondness."<sup>16</sup> It formed a step, certainly, in the development of his chiaroscuro. When the retrospective exhibition of his work took place at Boston in 1839,

15. *Ibid.*, pp. 152-54.

16. Oliver Wendell Holmes, "Exhibition of Pictures Painted by Washington Allston at Harding's Gallery, School Street," *North American Review*, L (1840), 358.

Allston's nephew, George Flagg, admired this picture above any other. His uncle remarked that he had painted it in deep affliction and was constantly in tears. His nephew said, "I do not understand how it is possible to paint under such circumstances."

"Ah, George," replied Allston, "nothing can prevent my painting but want of money; that paralyses me."<sup>17</sup>

The "Rebecca at the Well" (Pl. XXXIV) of the next year (1816) shows a return to the use of re-echoed colors. "The subject," he wrote to its purchaser, a Mr. Van Schaick of New York, "partaking of a pastoral, yet elegant simplicity, is one of a kind that I most delight in." It is a small picture with a handsome dusky atmosphere and a fine unity and serenity.

Personal "tone" (using the word in the same sense that Poe used it) is the distinguishing characteristic of these pictures. The "Rebecca" and the "Mother and Child," easy and harmonious, dignified and tranquil, have a peculiar dreamy grace which is an effect entirely of painting and not translatable into words. It does not come through particularly well in photographs, because it lives in the color; but it is distinctive, and it lingers in the mind. It is present not only in the narrative subjects but in the four quick sketches, done at a sitting, of the heads of Polish Jews whom he found in London in 1817 and painted for the sake of their bearded, exotic faces (Pls. XXXV and XXXVI). Some years afterward he named one of these sketches "Isaac of York," from Scott's novel *Ivanhoe*.

There is another portrait, probably the last which Allston painted before his return to America in 1818, of Samuel Williams (Pl. XLV). This portrait, like all the others, represents a personal relationship rather than an ordinary portrait commission. Williams, a Boston merchant, went to London in 1796 and died at Boston in 1841. He acted as Allston's banker in London, and Allston's mail was at one time directed in his care to his house at 13 Finsbury Square.<sup>18</sup> Imposing in scale and so rich in accessories that it belongs to the genre of *portrait d'apparat* which the eighteenth century had practiced so well, it shows

17. Flagg, *op. cit.*, p. 111.

18. Allston to Vanderlyn, June 28, 1813. "My address is to the care of Samuel Williams, Esq., no 13, Finsbury Square, London."

what Allston could do with the monumental portrait. The mingled power and reflective quality of the sitter's character, the grave and solitary mood, are Allston's characteristic way of seeing human life.

Portraits were for Allston a form of expression, not a means of earning a living. All his portraits are records of lives which meant something to him. There is record of only a handful of portraits beyond those already mentioned. He was thus the first major artist to live in America and support himself by a purely imaginative activity instead of by the trade of painting portraits or by some other activity still more extraneous to his art.

In September, 1817, Allston went on a six-week visit to Paris in company with Leslie and the English landscape painter, William Collins. A memento of this visit is the small study of the "concert of colors" in Veronese's "Marriage at Cana" in the Louvre, which belongs now to the Dana Collection. Another study of three figures and a white horse from Titian's "Adoration of the Magi" he gave to Coleridge. It hung in the poet's parlor at Highgate at the time of his death. The sight of the Venetian paintings in the Louvre gave a new impetus to Allston's conception of color, and on his return to London he plunged into a fever of activity. In the following autumn and winter he completed three major works: the huge canvas of "Uriel in the Sun" (Pl. XLI), the large landscape of "Elijah in the Desert," and "Jacob's Dream." The last-named picture I know only from a photograph; but it made a deep impression upon Leslie, Wordsworth, Washington Irving, and Mrs. Jameson. In the spring of 1817, before going to Paris, he had also made the first sketches of "Belshazzar's Feast,"<sup>19</sup> but the history of this picture belongs to another place.

The new idea of color developed in these pictures was a combination of underpainting and glazing to produce warm, rich, resonant tones that are not any one color but contain all colors floating in suspension. Local colors disappeared except as accents in the glow of his chiaroscuro. Leslie wrote to Washington Irving about the "Uriel," which seems to have been the first picture done after his return from Paris: "He

19. Allston to Washington Irving, May 9, 1817.

[Allston] has not yet got to work on this large picture ["Belshazzar's Feast"] but has finished a very grand and poetical figure of the angel Uriel sitting in the sun. The figure is colossal, the attitude and air very noble, and the form heroic without being overcharged. In the colour he has been equally successful, and with a very rich and glowing tone he has avoided all positive colours, which would have made him too material. There is neither red, blue nor yellow in the picture, and yet it possesses a harmony equal to the best pictures of Paul Veronese."<sup>20</sup> This is a good description of the peculiar warmth and luminosity of tone which he now achieved. It is not a descending series of hues re-echoed from certain positive primary notes, like the color of "The Dead Man Revived," but a chiaroscuro glowing with colors seen one through another, so that, while here and there the tone is brought up to certain color accents, the general effect is a harmony in which all colors are united. In a wholly different way it achieves the inner light which Delacroix later achieved by the ripple of reflected tints he called *flochetage*. It was a refinement of the use of colors superimposed one upon another that began with the "Diana in the Chase." But glazes now formed more of these layers of pigment than in his earlier technique, with the result that his color harmonies grew more and more aerial and luminous. It was this discovery of color which is light, instead of positive or local color that is, as Leslie put it, "material," which was the foundation of the great personal styles of the nineteenth century.<sup>21</sup>

The subject of the "Uriel" was taken from Book III of Milton's *Paradise Lost*. When Satan after his fall began to plot his assault upon the race of Man upon earth, he approached Heaven in disguise to learn where the newly created beings were to be found.

20. Letter of December 20, 1817, to Washington Irving (Leslie, *op. cit.*, p. 205).

21. The nineteenth century lacked the critical terminology to describe this style. Bostonians described Allston as the "American Titian," which is as inaccurate as to call Delacroix the "French Rubens." Any nineteenth-century painter placed beside the Renaissance or baroque artists looks like nothing but the nineteenth century—as, indeed, he should. Such terms merely indicate, in the defective terminology of that day, that his contemporaries realized the importance of Allston's stylistic innovation.

## SHAPES OF DELIGHT, OF MYSTERY, AND FEAR

He drew not nigh unheard; the Angel bright,  
Ere he drew nigh, his radiant visage turned,  
Admonished by his ear, and straight was known  
The Archangel Uriel; one of the seven  
Who in God's presence, nearest to his throne,  
Stand ready at command, and are his eyes. . . .

It was this figure, whose Homeric epithet is "gloriously bright," whom Allston wished to visualize. Oliver Wendell Holmes observed that merely not to fail in delineating such a vision was a triumph.<sup>22</sup> Allston himself described the picture: "Uriel in the Sun is a colossal figure, foreshortened, nearly twice the size of life. I surrounded him and the rock of adamant on which he sat with the prismatic colors, in the order in which the ray of light is decomposed by the prism. I laid them on with the strongest colors; and then with transparent colors, so intimately blended them as to reproduce the original ray; it was so bright it makes your eyes twinkle as you looked at it."<sup>23</sup>

What seemed bright to the eyes of 1817 is not so bright to those of the twentieth century, and the passage of time has also subdued the light. The effect now is of a warm, luminous glow, wine-brown, gold-brown, and gray-blue against a gold sky. The colossal scale gives dignity and even splendor to the mood of reverie. Of all Allston's works on the heroic scale, it is the most successful, combining romantic mystery with his own characteristic tone of reverie.

"Elijah in the Desert" (Pl. XLII), painted in three weeks immediately after the "Uriel," is also one of his most impressive pictures. The warm, atmospheric style is here developed in a subject finely expressive of Allston's love of the meditative and the solitary. The landscape is seen as if through a veil of color. The earth is a harmony of oak leaf and russet-browns, varied only by the cool gray-blue of Elijah's robe in the foreground and the blue of the distant mountains. The warm browns are reflected above in the curtain of dark clouds, but through rents in this mass of warm tone the eye looks into cool blue sky and white clouds. The picture is thus built of a wide, sonorous range of tone and of the

22. *Op. cit.*, p. 373.

23. Flagg, *op. cit.*, p. 130.



two simple contrasts, warm and cool, blue and brown. But the pigments are so fused in glazes that the color is dematerialized into air and light, an effect increased by the fact that the picture was painted with skimmed milk as a medium and has a dry mat surface unlike that of ordinary oil paint.

It belongs to the genus of "inhabited landscape," in which both human life and nature play an essential part in the effect of the whole. At first the eye sees what the landscape says of the vastness, grandeur, and solitude of the world. Then a raven on the dead tree which holds something in its beak catches the attention. Another raven, flying down toward what had been passed over by the first glance as a stone in the foreground, leads the attention at last to the figure of Elijah. The kneeling prophet is thus an incident in the vast silence of things; his part is prayer. In originality of conception, solemnity of feeling, resonance of tone, and pictorial unity, this is one of the great pictures of American romanticism.

"Elijah in the Desert" has had an interesting history. It was bought from a house in Boston by an English traveler, Henry Labouchère, afterward Lord Taunton, who was one of the famous collectors of the first half of the nineteenth century. His taste was greatly admired by Waagen, when that great connoisseur visited England. He had many other fine pictures, but the pearl of his collection was the early, unfinished Michelangelo, "Madonna and Child with Infant St. John and Angels," which after Lord Taunton's death in 1869 the National Gallery bought from the trustees of his estate. The trustees exhibited some of his other pictures at the Royal Academy in 1870. There Allston's "Elijah" was seen by a Boston family traveling in England, the Hoopers, who bought it and presented it to the newly formed Museum of Fine Arts, where it became Accession No. 1 of that great collection.

"Jacob's Dream" (Pl. XLIII), painted in 1817, is described as a development of the same poetry of space and light. The small outline engraving of the composition in the *Outlines and Sketches by Washington Allston* (1850) and the small halftone reproduction in the *New England Magazine* of 1894 give no adequate impression of it. Mrs. Jameson's description is worth quoting. "The subject is very sublimely

and originally treated, with a feeling wholly distinct from the shadowy mysticism of Rembrandt, and the graceful simplicity of Raphael. Instead of a ladder or steps, with a few angels, he embodied the idea of a glorious vision, in which countless myriads of the heavenly host are seen dissolving into light and distance, and immeasurable flights of steps rising, spreading above and beyond each other, vanish at last in infinitude."<sup>24</sup> It was purchased by Lord Egremont and has been at Petworth since it was exhibited at the British Institution in 1819. Its effect upon some of Allston's contemporaries may be found in Wordsworth's poem "Composed upon an Evening of Extraordinary Splendor and Beauty." Not long after leaving England, Allston received a copy of the poem, on which was the note: "Transcribed by Mrs. Wordsworth, in gratitude for the pleasure she received from the sight of Allston's pictures, in particular 'Jacob's Dream.' " Added to it was the postscript: "N.B.—The author knows not how far he was indebted to Mr. Allston for part of the third stanza. The multiplication of ridges in a mountainous country, as Mr. Allston has probably observed, are from two causes, sunny or watery haze or vapor: the former is here meant. When does Mr. Allston return to England? Wm. Wordsworth."<sup>25</sup>

Another example of development of luminosity and resonance of tone by dissolving solid colors in atmosphere is the picture called "The Sisters" (Pl. XLIV), painted before 1818. The title was given it by Coleridge. It was an experiment to work out the secret of the Venetian glow, and Allston used in it an old Venetian composition, much as Manet later adapted the compositions of Giogione. The fair-haired girl was suggested by Titian's well-known figure, the so-called portrait of his daughter Lavinia. The Titian which Allston knew, however, was not the picture of a girl holding a dish of fruit (now in Berlin), which was at that time in Florence, but another version which was sold at the Orleans sale in 1798 to Lady Lucas (Countess de Grey). This version shows a girl in a green dress holding up a jewel casket on a silver dish.<sup>26</sup> Allston took the

24. Anna Jameson, "Washington Allston," *Athenaeum* (London), 1844, p. 16.

25. Quoted by Flagg, *op. cit.*, pp. 133-34.

26. Gustav F. Waagen, *Treasures of Art in Great Britain* (3 vols.; London, 1854), II, 85, describes it as harder and less interesting in quality than the Berlin version.

idea of a girl's blonde head turned back in that position, and another favorite Venetian theme of the contrast of blonde and brunette, but he translated them into his own terms. The blonde girl is in a puce-colored dress, with a blue-and-gray striped sash; the brunette in a dress with a cherry-brown blouse and brownish-purple skirt, a blue-and-gray striped sleeve, and a green sash. The great open-mouthed jar at the left is blue-green. The group is set against a warm red curtain and a shadowy blue sky with white clouds. The difficulty of describing the colors is a mark of Allston's success in achieving the Venetian quality of underpainting and glazing, by which the entire canvas is made to count as a single unified glow. The glow changes from warm to cool, from light to dark, from red to blue to yellow; but all variations are held within a rich and subtle unity.

"The Sisters" remained on the artist's hands until 1839, when it was purchased by the painter, Francis Alexander. It thus forms a definite link with one of the men who, although not a pupil of Allston, came under his influence and carried on something of his conception of color in Boston into the middle of the century. William Page was another of these younger men who worked with the same technique of one layer of pigment superimposed upon another but, unfortunately, without the sound, lasting quality of Allston's color.

In the spring of 1817, before his trip to Paris, Allston had begun the first study of "Belshazzar's Feast." It was a subject which Rembrandt had painted in an early work about 1635 (in the collection of the Earl of Derby, Knowsley House), which was greatly admired at this time. Opie, discussing color in his Royal Academy lectures of 1807, said, for example: "In the famous picture of the Crucifixion, by Tintoretto, *the ominous, terrific, and ensanguined hue of the whole*, THE DISASTROUS TWILIGHT . . . has probably never been exceeded, except by Rembrandt, in the bloodless, heart-appalling hue, spread over his Belshazzar's Vision of the Handwriting on the Wall."<sup>27</sup> Belshazzar's feast, like the revival of the dead man and the dream of Jacob, was thus a subject to which Allston's interest was drawn by its greatness in the art of the past as well as by its dra-

27. John Opie, *Lectures on Painting, Delivered at the Royal Academy of Arts*, p. 157.

matic appeal to his romantic interests. The incident, lying on the border line of the known and the unknown, dramatic, solemn, rich, and mysterious, was especially attractive to him in the mood which he had pursued in "The Dead Man Revived" and "The Angel Releasing St. Peter." His earliest mention of it in a letter to Washington Irving (May 9, 1817) emphasizes the *order* of the composition: "A multitude of figures . . . without confusion." He goes on to say: "Don't you think it a fine subject. I know not any that so happily unites the magnificent and the awful. A mighty sovereign surrounded by his whole court, intoxicated with his own state, in the midst of his revellings, palsied in a moment under the spell of a preternatural hand suddenly tracing his doom on the wall before him; his powerless limbs like a wounded spider's shrunk up to his body, while his heart, compressed to a point, is only kept from vanishing by the terrified suspense that animates it during the interpretation of his mysterious sentence. His less guilty but scarcely less agitated queen, the panic-struck courtiers and concubines, the splendid and deserted banquet-table, the half-arrogant, half-astonished magicians, and holy vessels of the temple (Shining, as it were, in triumph through the gloom) and the calm, solemn contrast of the prophet, standing like an animated pillar in the midst, breathing forth the oracular destruction of the Empire!"<sup>28</sup>

He worked out a most effective evocation of this glowing, romantic spell in two highly finished sketches, one in line and sepia, the second with color (Pls. XXXVIII and XXXIX). The large canvas, twelve by sixteen feet, was the better part finished when he sailed for home in the autumn of 1818. On his arrival at Boston he wrote to James McMurtrie in Philadelphia that "all the laborious part is over, but there remains still about six or eight months work to do to it."<sup>29</sup> Why was it never finished? The answer is part of the history of his final American period, but, since it had been made by some critics a symbol of the conflict between the American artist and his environment, we may perhaps anticipate the question. For Allston's return to the United States in 1818 was, accord-

28. Quoted by Flagg, *op. cit.*, p. 71.

29. Letter of November 17, 1818 (quoted in *ibid.*, p. 144).

ing to one view, the end of his art; he sailed off westward into the Atlantic, to a world where it was impossible for him to thrive as an artist, and his failure to finish the "Belshazzar" is the symbol and result of the cold blight which New England laid upon his art. This answer has an attractive simplicity and appeals, moreover, to a vein of intellectual self-pity very popular among us. Nothing seems to please the American intelligentsia so much as saying that it is impossible to do really good work, as an artist, or as a scholar, in America. Yet, in spite of the wide popularity of this nursery tale, it is not the reason for Allston's failure to finish "Belshazzar's Feast." The reasons—for there are several—are to be found partly in chronology, partly in temperament, partly in the surrounding atmosphere, and partly in the very nature of romantic art. But they are related rather to Allston's continued growth as an artist after his return to America than to his extinction.

Allston arrived at Boston in October, 1818. It is always an experience to change one's country; for an artist it is a very important experience. The atmosphere of London had been, in spite of Allston's many literary friends, one of studio life and of painters' activity. The city was filled with artists and their work, with exhibitions of contemporary pictures and of old masters, with collectors and dealers, auctions and great private collections. In Boston he found himself in an atmosphere primarily literary and reflective. Painting was represented by one or two portrait painters. The first art exhibit at the Athenaeum took place only in 1827, nine years after his arrival. The one really active art was literature. Allston had shown himself before acutely sensitive to such changes in atmosphere. He had revealed an easy facility in writing verses during his college years. On his return in 1808, he had turned again to poetry. In 1818 the elder Richard Henry Dana, the poet, who was to become his closest friend, had just left or been forced to leave the editorial board of the *North American Review* because of his defense of Keats's poetry. He was soon trying to start a new magazine to be called the *Idle Man*. Dana had enthusiastically reviewed Allston's first poems in the *North American Review*, and in those early days of American literature the volume had made an impression. Now Dana appealed to him for help

with his new magazine. It was the kind of challenge to Allston's loyalty that he never refused. He wrote two essays and a novel for the *Idle Man*, although the magazine came to an end before the novel had time to appear. But his energies and thoughts were thus, to some extent, diverted into new channels during his first years in Boston.

On his arrival his money had given out. He needed cash for immediate living expenses and could not afford to spend six or eight months without income while working on "Belshazzar." For two years the picture remained rolled up while he painted small pictures for immediate sale;<sup>30</sup> yet, even so, he found that the money from one of these pictures was spent while he was painting the next. This was the situation which the Allston Trust was designed to remedy. Ten gentlemen of Boston subscribed a thousand dollars each to buy the "Belshazzar," the money to be held in trust by three other trustees. Allston was to be allowed to draw upon the purchase fund for his living expenses while he completed the picture. The plan was that he was thus to be set free to work on the picture as well as nobly paid. When he finally unrolled the huge canvas in September, 1820, he invited Gilbert Stuart to look at it. Stuart suggested that Allston ought to change the point of sight, which meant altering the perspective of the architectural background. Allston accepted the criticism, and it seems to have taken him months to complete the laborious and purely mechanical task. When this was finished, three years had passed since he had rolled the canvas up in London. In the meantime the mood of his art had changed. The nature of that change may be left to another chapter. The fact is simply that Allston had grown into another period of his life, in which the tranquil and meditative element of his art, reinforced by the introspective atmosphere of his new environment, displaced the grandiose and dramatic interests predominant in the preceding fifteen years. As a result, although he worked at the "Belshazzar" doggedly, he never could recapture the feeling which he had begun to express so many years before.

*Kubla Khan* and *Christabel*, Coleridge's great unfinished poems, are familiar examples of the fragility of the romantic mood. Allston himself

30. Allston to Francis B. Winthrop, November 23, 1821.

had already abandoned one large canvas, the "Jason," which had lain in a packing-case at Leghorn for several years, because he found, on unrolling it, that his interest in it had disappeared. Had the circumstances been the same now, I believe that he would simply have dropped the "Belshazzar" and gone on to other things. Unfortunately, the picture had become famous upon his easel. The newspapers published speculations on its progress. The ten gentlemen who had subscribed to the purchase of the picture had the kindest of intentions; they wished only to do honor to their city and to set the artist free from financial difficulties for a few weeks or months while he completed the picture.<sup>31</sup> But he now found it impossible to satisfy himself with the picture; and, the longer he worked, the more heavily his debts for the money he had drawn weighed upon his spirits. Allston was a singularly gentle and unworldly individual, keenly sensitive to even the most remote obligation,<sup>32</sup> and he had the personal pride of a gentleman of the old South. This debt bit into his soul. He sweated blood to finish the picture. I think that only an artist who had slaved at a work of which he has lost the idea can appreciate the bitterness and despair of such labor. In 1823 he showed the picture to Chester Harding and Jonathan Mason; it was finished except for the figure of Daniel.<sup>33</sup> But he could neither satisfy himself and finish it nor leave it alone. He spent most of his time from 1822 to 1828 painting, changing, painting out, haunted by the discrepancy between the

31. The existing copy of the Tripartite Indenture in the Athenaeum, dated May 9, 1827, is a renewal of an early agreement with some changes in the list of subscribers. Arthur Dexter ("The Fine Arts in Boston," in Justin Winsor, *Memorial History of Boston*, IV, 395) places the original indenture at the time the picture was first unrolled and of Stuart's criticism, which seems inherently probable.

32. The curious case of Mr. Francis B. Winthrop of New Haven illustrates Allston's sensitiveness to a wholly fanciful obligation. Mr. Winthrop purchased (from whom it is not clear) the fine sketch of "The Angel Releasing St. Peter from Prison." Then he decided he did not like it and wrote Allston a letter complaining that he was dissatisfied with the picture and the price he had paid for it. Allston wrote in reply that, as Mr. Winthrop had purchased the painting on his own initiative and the artist had had nothing to do with the transaction, he could not feel at fault: yet, nevertheless, he would paint another *picture* for Mr. Winthrop, which he would give him to replace the picture he did not like. As his difficulties increased, Allston was never able to do this; but Mr. Winthrop continued to write him and to complain bitterly that he had never received the promised substitute. Two drafts of Allston's replies are among the Allston papers.

33. Sweetser, *op. cit.*, pp. 120-30.

vanished inspiration and his new feelings toward life. Occasionally to an artist friend he broke the silence with which he surrounded himself during these years. These letters breathe an utter despair, as of one lost in anguish and humiliation of spirit.<sup>34</sup> In the winter of 1828-29 fate intervened. The barn which was his studio was sold, and the new owner wished to turn it into a livery stable. Allston unstretched the picture and rolled it up.<sup>35</sup> It remained rolled until 1839. When Mrs. Jameson visited the new studio in Cambridgeport, she says that she was warned not to speak of it. "It had been in hand since 1814 [*sic*], had been begun on an immense scale (sixteen or seventeen feet in length) and he had gone on altering, effacing, and marring—promising and delaying its completion till it had become a subject he could hardly bear to allude to, or to hear mentioned by others; his sensitiveness on this one point did at last almost verge on insanity. I saw this fatal picture rolled up in a corner of the apartment, and scarcely dared to look that way."<sup>36</sup> Late in 1839 he took it up again. In 1840 and 1841 he was hard at work upon it and would allow no one to enter the studio.<sup>37</sup> A long illness interrupted his work, but, as his strength permitted, he continued to work. Just before his death he had blotted out the figure of Belshazzar, intending to do it over. He was working at it all the day of his death. "Belshazzar's Feast" was never finished (Pl. XL).

It was in all respects a great personal tragedy, humiliating to the artist and embarrassing to the men who had wished to help him. But, in spite of opinion to the contrary, it seems to me not a case of an unfavorable environment (as those believe who would have Allston an example of the artist stultified by a barren New England environment) but rather of the opposite. The world was too interested and friendly, too eager to encourage him, when the wise part would have been to drop the thing and go on to other tasks. In isolation or surrounded by indifference, he

34. Allston to Cogdell, July 1, 1826; Allston to Leslie, November 9, 1826. In the latter he also introduces Mr. Nathaniel Amory (one of the subscribers to "Belshazzar") and speaks of him with great warmth of feeling, as "he is one of the few men who would find it impossible to make you feel 'gratitude as a burden.'"

35. Allston to James McMurtie, May 27, 1831.

36. *Op. cit.*, pp. 39-40.

37. Sweetser, *op. cit.*, pp. 120-30.



would have been free to follow his instinct and leave the "Belshazzar" behind as he did the "Jason."

But, in spite of all that can be said about the incomplete state of the work, it is more to the point to remember what was accomplished. James Jackson Jarves, the disciple of Ruskin and collector of Florentine primitives, was one of the most captious and irritable critics that ever wrote on American art but also one of the most discerning. In 1864, when the romantic period was over and just before the era of imitating contemporary European art began, Jarves wrote a survey of American art. It was his opinion that the most important thing that had been accomplished, and the best hope for the future, was that American painting had established a style of color based upon the Venetian mode of painting, which gave it at that time the best color of all contemporary schools. And, looking back over all that had been done in America up to that time, he called "Belshazzar's Feast" "the greatest, best composed, and most difficult painting yet attempted by an American artist."<sup>38</sup>

Nonetheless, one cannot leave the subject without a final reflection upon romantic narrative painting as a whole. Is the common indifference to these pictures—or, worse than indifference, the hostility of modern taste—a result of the great swing away from subject matter in painting, of the triumph of realism, or of loss of interest in the emotions of mystery and fear which the romantic painters embodied? We have witnessed a revival of the last-named emotions in the program of surrealism. But the prevailing theories of criticism still echo the convictions of the French late-nineteenth-century theory that *quality*, not subject, was the only aim of painting. The later nineteenth century was in revolt against the romantic generation, and the history of our painting is still largely told in the terms of the books written at the time of that revolt. Yet the imagination has a thousand forms, and this standard, if applied indiscriminately, leads us into curious difficulties. Mr. Van Wyck Brooks,

38. James Jackson Jarves, *The Art Idea: Sculpture, Painting, and Architecture in America* (5th ed.; Boston and New York, 1864), pp. 205 ff. Ironically enough, since that time color has been the weakness of American painting, as anyone knows who has tried to hang a gallery of mixed American and European pictures.

with his customary felicity of style, expresses the prejudices of the art critics better than they can themselves, so that I quote the passage in which he sums up the current judgment that Allston "followed the wrong tune, as Stuart might have told him, Stuart who saw the dangers of 'elevation' and ridiculed Benjamin West's 'ten-acre pictures,' filled with apostles and prophets. A painter's business, Stuart always said, was to paint what he saw with his eyes and leave the elevation to the poets; and Allston had followed West, against his eyes. No one doubted his elevation. It was his painting that had gone to pieces, and anyone in Paris could have told him why. Even Delacroix, who continued to paint historical canvases but who knew that the time for his genre had long passed. See his comments on the case of Gros, so strangely parallel to that of Allston."<sup>39</sup> But the two elements of this criticism—that Allston's painting was behind the times and that it was in the wrong direction for painting to go anyway—are both irrelevant. Why was it legitimate for Raphael to paint "Jacob's Dream" or for Rembrandt to paint "Belshazzar's Feast" but not legitimate for a romantic artist to do so should he wish? If Rembrandt is acceptable as a great artist, the drama of the inner life has its place in painting. I have argued elsewhere the point that the element of psychological expression pursued by American, English, and German romanticism was a necessary contribution to the life of Western art, parallel to the predominantly architectonic expression by the French.<sup>40</sup>

Delacroix's criticism of Gros, in his essay written in 1849, was that Gros had *not* continued in the vein of dramatic painting which he had created about 1808–12, which Delacroix considered his true greatness. And it was precisely by pursuing this vein in "The Bark of Dante" (1821), "The Massacre of Chios" (1824), and "The Death of Sardanapalus" (1827) that Delacroix himself founded the greatness of French nineteenth-century painting. These dates are important. Allston's first great dramatic subject was painted in 1812, and he had largely grown

39. *The Flowering of New England, 1815–1865* (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1936), p. 163.

40. E. P. Richardson, *The Way of Western Art, 1776–1914* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1939), pp. 15–16.

out of the impulse by 1822. He thus anticipated Delacroix's discoveries rather than lagged behind them, and his work belongs to the period when this type of painting—in Blake, Prud'hon, Gros, the early work of Ingres, Turner, and the German romantics—was the interest of the most progressive minds in art. By 1830 the problem of creation had almost entirely changed, although the aftereffects of those early decades lingered on in popular taste. Life itself had been transformed by the changes of thirty years, and the best artists of the 1800's and the 1810's who still survived had passed on to other interests. It is remarkable how few of them were still alive in 1830. Schiller died in 1805, Runge in 1810, Keats in 1821, Shelley in 1822, Prud'hon in 1823, Byron and Géricault in 1824, David and Fuseli in 1825, Beethoven and Blake in 1827, Goethe and Scott in 1832, and Coleridge, though still living, was no longer writing. These deaths were in themselves sufficient to alter the mental climate of the age, and their catalogue will perhaps prove what I have insisted upon throughout this study—that the artists of the first thirty years of the romantic movement form an entity in themselves and cannot be telescoped with the generation of 1830–60.

But is there, after one admits the right of the artists of these decades to explore their own problem, anything more fundamental which distinguishes the romantic period from the Renaissance and the Baroque, something which might touch the root of the imaginative life? Both the Romanticist and the Renaissance and baroque artist—to say nothing of the Gothic—drew upon literature for subjects and loved to paint "stories." Giotto, Michelangelo, and Jan van Eyck painted imaginative re-creations of events in the distant past just as did the Romanticists.

The profound difference between the Romanticist and the Baroque or Renaissance painter was not so much in style or in scale as in his convictions and beliefs—in other words, in his culture. Every artist has two kinds of experience to draw upon: the experiences which he feels as a man and shares with his fellow-men and the special experiences which are his as an individual and as a professional painter. When the artist of the fifteenth century covered a wall in a church or painted an altarpiece,

he was painting from a common store of experience which he shared with his fellow-men; whereas the romantic artist began the modern tendency to paint from his special experiences as an individual which separated him from the common experience of mankind. The tendency was not so strong as it became later in the period of art for art's sake; but the cleavage had begun. Since the beginning of the Middle Ages, the core of the painter's activity had been to illustrate the beliefs of Christianity. Following the Renaissance the poetry and mythology of antiquity became also part of this common body of subject matter. After the French Revolution, Christianity and, after the romantic revolt, classical antiquity disappear as set subjects. At the same time a new word, unknown to previous centuries, appears in the language of art—a word which is a portent of fateful changes. The word was "originality." The focus of art was now upon the sensibility of the artist, not upon the general interests of society which were expressed by him.

This was the deep cultural cleavage between the romantic age and those which had gone before. The artists continued by force of tradition to paint in the monumental style developed for the altarpiece and the mural painting. But the monumental form is a public form of expression. It has been great when it has spoken the common convictions and sentiments of mankind, to which the artist had only to contribute his personal insight and gift for expression. When art began to express private experiences, the reason for the existence of a monumental art was gone—as artists eventually discovered instinctively for themselves.

This change showed itself in the emotional tone of the romantic subject. The shapes which Keats imagined in the vision of the Charioteer—

Shapes of delight, of mystery, and fear,  
Passing along before a dusky space—

were characteristic of the imagination of these decades. If the images of delight and mystery still move us, while those of fear seem forced or exaggerated, is it because the romantic artist did not really believe in that fear? In Coleridge's words, the object of the poetry of the super-

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natural "was to consist in the interesting of the affections by the dramatic truth of such emotions as would naturally accompany such situations, *supposing them real.*" The artist's delight was real beyond a doubt; but his fear was only make-believe, to give him a new kind of delicious pleasure. Is not this why it no longer moves us? To Traini, painting the demons of hell in the cloisters at Pisa, hell was real.

# Biographical Summary

## Final American Period, 1818-43

1818. *In October Allston arrived at Boston. He found a studio in a "large barn on John Prince's estate, near the northwest corner of High Street and Pearl Street. . . . His rooms were on Sister Street, which ran out of Federal Street near Dr. Channing's Church, and he got his meals at the celebrated restaurant of Rouillard, the successor of Monsieur Julien, at the corner of Milk and Congress Streets" (Sweetser). Elected an Associate of the Royal Academy, London.*
1819. *Allston spent the summer in Cambridge and Cambridgeport.*
1820. *The first Tripartite Agreement was formed, and Allston began work on "Belshazzar's Feast" in September.*
1821. *Allston became acquainted with Sully, who spent several months in Boston. Horatio Greenough entered Harvard in this year and soon became acquainted with Allston.*
1825. *Allston served on a committee with Loammi Baldwin (chairman), Professor George Ticknor, Dr. Jacob Bigelow, and Samuel Swett, which reported to the monument association on July 1, 1825, the plan chosen for the obelisk on Bunker Hill, which plan was adopted and the monument erected.<sup>1</sup>*
1827. *First art exhibition at the Boston Athenaeum.*
1828. *Godfather by proxy to William Collins' second son, Wilkie Collins. In December Allston's studio building was sold, and he was forced to roll up "Belshazzar's Feast" and move to smaller quarters.*
1829. *Asked to take De Veaux of South Carolina as a pupil, Allston*

1. Levi S. Gould, *Ancient Middlesex* (Somerville, Mass., 1905), p. 30.

*declined on the ground that he was not accustomed to receive pupils and recommended Chester Harding.*

1830. *On June 1 he was married to Martha Remington Dana, the sister of the poet, Richard H. Dana, a cousin of his first wife. She was then forty-six and survived him, living until 1862. Immediately after the wedding they moved to Cambridgeport. Land was cheap, for the greater part of Cambridgeport was then a huckleberry pasture. Allston's first house was at some distance from his studio but exactly where is still obscure. His studio in Cambridgeport, with which a later generation came to identify him, was not occupied until the succeeding year, for in a letter to Cogdell (July 25, 1831) he wrote: "I have a few weeks since been installed in my new painting room." It stood on the north side of Auburn Street, about fifty feet west of Magazine Street. Later he built his own house on Auburn Street a little farther from Magazine Street, so that the studio was in the garden beside the house.*

1830-33. *Allston refused the suggestion of a commission to paint a decoration for the rotunda of the Capitol in Washington. This decoration had become a political football in the quarrels between the pro- and anti-Jackson men, and such political passions were roused by the question whether the Battle of New Orleans should be represented in one of the decorations that the resolution was never put to a vote. Allston was not an admirer of Jackson, and the political atmosphere of the whole affair was very distasteful to him. About 1833 George Whiting Flagg (1816-97), the son of his half-brother, Henry Collins Flagg II, spent eighteen months studying art with Allston and Osgood Bowman.*

1835. *Allston was so busy that he had to decline several commissions. Samuel F. B. Morse visited him.*

1836. *Jared Bradley Flagg (1820-99), the second son of his half-brother and Allston's future biographer, came to study art with him. Miss Sarah Clarke, the sister of James Freeman Clarke and a friend of Margaret Fuller, was also his pupil sometime during the thirties.*

#### BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY

1839. *Exhibit of forty-seven paintings by Allston in Chester Harding's studio. In November of this year he began to work again on "Belshazzar's Feast."*
1841. *Elected first president of the Boston Artists' Association and exhibited with them in Harding's studio. Near the close of the year Allston had a long illness that confined him to his room most of the winter and left him very feeble throughout the spring and summer of 1842. On September 26, 1842, he wrote to Cogdell: "I have at last, in my old age, got into a house of my own. . . . It has one great advantage, it is but fifty feet from my present painting room." The house and studio at Magazine and Auburn streets have long since disappeared.*
- 1842-43. *The last winter of his life, Allston read the Lectures on Art aloud to Professors Longfellow and Felton.*
1843. *Allston died on July 9 at Cambridgeport, Massachusetts. He was buried in the Dana vault in the churchyard on the Common, Cambridge.*



## Chapter Eleven

### The Mist of Brooding Thought

THE pictures of Allston's last twenty-five years in America are difficult to describe. They depend, even more than do the big narrative pictures, upon resonance of tone and luminosity, and these qualities are not translatable into words; they do not even photograph. While narrative painting is kept alive to some extent in modern thought by the prestige of Rivera and Orozco and the current enthusiasm for murals, the smaller pictures which Allston did after his return to America are part of a wave of feeling distinctive of America alone and of that period alone. Yet the enthusiasm they aroused, of which Margaret Fuller's experience. (p. 22) is typical, is a sign that they mark in some way an epoch in our imaginative life and opened a new vein of feeling which proved gratifying and refreshing.

Let the reader think, if he will, of the first moment of American nineteenth-century literature—not of the later, well-known period in the 1850's when *Walden*, *Leaves of Grass*, *The House of the Seven Gables*, *Representative Men*, and *Moby Dick* were appearing but of thirty years before, when the first tentative suggestions of that literature began to appear. The earlier period is typified by the essays of Dr. Channing and Richard Henry Dana, the poetry of Bryant, and the earliest of Hawthorne's tales. The mood of those of Hawthorne's tales which were written in the 1820's, like "The Gentle Boy," is perhaps the nearest approach in literature to the mood of Allston's later painting. How distinctive these fragile, tenuous tales are the reader will recognize for himself: a little sad and monotonous but sensitive and artistic expressions of a mood of quietism which was neither so hopeful nor so inter-

ested in outward nature as the literature of the later period was to be. Something of this same tone is found in the dreaming figures, the twilight landscapes, and the delicate aerial fantasies which are the characteristic products of Allston's final period. When he turned back occasionally in these years to dramatic subjects—to the Old Testament for "Jeremiah," "Saul and the Witch of Endor," and "Miriam the Prophetess," or to Mrs. Radcliffe's novels for "Spalatro's Vision of the Bloody Hand"—the effect is not convincing. The dramatic mood refused to return.

Hawthorne in one of his early tales, "The Toll-gatherer's Day," speaks of those who, wherever they go, "still journey through a mist of brooding thought." The notion lingered in his mind, and in the *Mosses from an Old Manse* he rephrased the idea: "a man," he said, "not estranged from human life, yet enveloped in the midst of it with a veil of intermingled gloom and brightness." It is the description of a type of mind, or rather of an attitude toward life, that had a special appeal to an age which felt an urge toward quietism and toward the inner life that was no longer satisfied by the old Calvinist framework of New England thought but that had not as yet discovered a new outlet. This was first offered in the arts by Allston's small quiet pictures, images of reverie filled with a mood of repose and with a love of solitude and contemplation.

Allston has himself described the contrast between his youthful and his late work. He wrote of his youth to Dunlap: "My favorite subjects, with an occasional comic intermission, were banditti. I well remember one of these, where I thought I had happily succeeded in cutting a throat! The subject of this precious performance was, robbers fighting with each other for the spoils, over the body of a murdered traveler. And clever ruffians I thought them. I did not get rid of this banditti mania until I had been over a year in England. It seems that a fondness for subjects of violence is common with young artists. One might suppose that the youthful mind would delight in scenes of an opposite character. Perhaps the reason of the contrary may be found in this: that the natural condition of youth being one incessant excitement, from the continual influx of novelty—for all about us must *at one time be new*—it must needs

have something fierce, terrible or unusual to force it above its wonted tone. But the time must come to every man who lives beyond the middle age, when 'there is nothing new under the sun.' His novelties are then the *refacimenti* of his former life. The gentler emotions are then as early friends who revisit him in dreams, and who, recalling the past, give a grace and beauty, nay, a rapture even, to what in the hey-day of his youth had seemed to him spiritless and flat. And how beautiful is this law of nature—perfuming, as it were, our very graves with the unheeded flowers of childhood.

"One of my favorite haunts when a child in Carolina, was a forest spring where I used to catch minnows, and I daresay with all the callousness of a fisherman; at this moment I can see that spring, and the pleasant conjuror Memory has brought again those little creatures before me; but how unlike to what they were! They seem to me like the spirits of the woods, which a flash from their little diamond eyes lights up afresh in all their gorgeous garniture of leaves and flowers. But where am I going?"<sup>1</sup>

Of his return to America in 1818 Allston wrote to Dunlap: "A homesickness which (in spite of some of the best and kindest friends, and every encouragement that I could wish as an artist) I could not overcome, brought me back to my own country in 1818. We made Boston Harbour on a clear evening in October. It was an evening to remember! The wind fell and left our ship almost stationary on a long low swell, as smooth as glass and undulating under one of our gorgeous autumnal skies like a prairie of amber. The moon looked down on us like a living thing, as if to bid us welcome, and the fanciful thought is still in my memory that she broke her image on the water to make partners for a dance of fire-flies—and they *did* dance, if I ever saw dancing. Another thought recurs: that I had returned to a mighty empire—that I was in the very waters, which the gallant Constitution had first broken, whose building I saw when at college, and whose 'slaughter-breathing brass,' to use a quotation from worthy Cotton Mather's *Magnalia*, but now 'grew hot and spoke' her *name* among the nations! This patriotic feeling is not a thing for

1. William Dunlap, *A History of the Rise and Progress of the Arts of Design*, II, 156-57.

which any credit is claimed, it would only have been discreditable to have been without it."<sup>2</sup>

Boston proved at first very encouraging. He found a studio "in the large barn on John Prince's estate, near the northwest corner of High Street and Pearl Street."<sup>3</sup> This is now in a drab area near the South Station, and great changes made by filling in the harbor hide its original character. At that time his studio was almost at the water's edge and close by Fort Hill (a height which was afterward entirely removed), so that he again showed his instinct for a place with a wide prospect. In the early winter he wrote to Leslie in London of five orders for small pictures and a possible order for a large painting for the Boston Hospital.<sup>4</sup> On May 18, 1821, he wrote at greater length to Collins of eleven pictures he had done in 1819 and 1820, which, in view of the statement in the *Dictionary of American Biography* that his art came to end with his return to America, seems a fairly respectable output.

"Dear Collins," he wrote, "I have been constantly employed ever since I have been here and have sold my pictures as soon as finished. . . . The first three months after my return here (October 1818 to January 1819) was spent in visiting my friends, but since then I have not been a week idle. Some might think I might have done more, but you, who are not accustomed to whistle off your pictures like those of the Luca Giordano school, perhaps think the number sufficient for two years. The first I painted was Beattie's Minstrel, then a moonlight,—a sunset—the Flight of Florimel, from Spenser—Dante's Beatrice—a small figure—Jeremiah dictating to Baruch, the scribe, larger than life—Saul and the Witch of Endor—another landscape, after sunset with cattle—and Miriam the Prophetess singing her song of triumph, large as life."<sup>5</sup>

Some of his energy went into literature. By 1821 he had written the essays on "The Hypochondriac" and "Written in Spring," which appeared in the *Idle Man*, as well as the novel *Monaldi*. The latter is a

2. *Ibid.*, p. 183.

3. Moses F. Sweetser, *Allston*, p. 94.

4. Leslie's reply of February 6, 1819, is quoted in Jared B. Flagg, *Washington Allston, Life and Letters*, p. 146.

5. Allston to Collins, May 18, 1821 (Dana Papers in the Massachusetts Historical Society).

romance laid in Italy, with an extravagant "Gothic" plot but with some charming descriptive passages. It belongs to the early phase of romantic feeling, and, when it was finally published in book form in 1841, it was already out of period. But it made an impression, for Steele MacKaye dramatized it as his first independent production on the New York stage in 1872.<sup>6</sup>

One of the first pictures Allston painted in America was an evocation of these lines of Spenser's *Faerie Queene*:

All suddenly out of the thickest brush,  
Upon a milk-white palfrey all alone,  
A goodly Lady did foreby them rush,  
Whose face did seem as clear as christall stone,  
And eke, through fear, as white as whale's bone.  
Her garments all were wrought of beaten gold,  
And all her steed with tinsel trappings shone,  
Which fled so fast that nothing might him hold,  
And scarce them leisure gave her passing to behold.

Still, as she fled, her eye she backward threw,  
As fearing evil that pursued her fast;  
And her fair yellow locks behind her flew,  
Loosely dispersed with puff of every blast,  
All as a blazing star doth far outcast  
His hairy beams and flowing locks disspread.

The wonderful, potent atmosphere which makes this vision of a figure in burnished gold on a galloping white horse so real in the mind is Spenser at his best. No one, perhaps, will deny that such poetry represents a remarkable moment of the imagination or that it is a kind of imagination totally unlike what is common today. It may serve to indicate the *tone* of imaginative life which Allston was trying to arrive at himself and therefore admired in others. He spoke to Elizabeth Palmer Peabody, two decades later, of Spenser as "an inexhaustible source" and said that, although he had taken several subjects from the *Faerie Queene*, he wanted to take many more.<sup>7</sup>

6. Percy MacKaye, *Epoch* (2 vols.; New York: Boni & Liveright, 1927), I, 166, 168-75. F. B. Carpenter painted a portrait of Steele MacKaye as Monaldi.

7. Elizabeth Palmer Peabody, "Last Evening with Allston," in *Last Evening with Allston, and Other Papers* (Boston, 1886), p. 3.

Allston's "The Flight of Florimell" (frontispiece) is not, however, a literary picture in the usual sense, for its poetry—and it has a very definite poetic mood—lies in its color and light, which are purely pictorial effects. Florimell in a dress of the color of greenish Byzantine gold and flying yellow hair, the white horse, the two knights in their gleaming armor, the glimpse of blue sky above, and the vista through an opening of the trees to a distant mountain and plain are accents within the changing golden half-light of the forest. This light is neither somber nor brilliant but a transparent glow which creates the atmosphere of fantasy within which the figures moved.

It is interesting that Spenser was one of the few poets whom Nathaniel Hawthorne enjoyed; and it is worth while to remember that the tone of taste in Allston's American period was such that the slow tempo, the diffuse moonlit splendor, and the fantasy of the *Faerie Queene* could have such reverberations in it. Sweetser says that the "Florimell" was painted for Allston's friend, Loammi Baldwin, a well-known civil engineer who constructed the Charlestown and Norfolk naval dry docks.

"Beatrice" (Pl. XLVII), painted in 1819 for Theodore Lyman, was one of the pictures that made so strong an impression on the youthful Margaret Fuller. It is one of the earliest examples of a kind of image of reverie which was to become most characteristic of the nineteenth century—the dreaming figure of a woman, very quietly painted, and having at its best no subject but its own mood of grace and repose. It is a theme that recurs constantly in Corot and Delacroix, in Millet in his classical phase, in Rossetti, in George Fuller and La Farge, and even, in a sense, in Courbet and Degas and Renoir. When Allston initiated it in America, it was a novel expression of those gentle and quiet sentiments for which many sensitive minds were searching.

The "small figure" which follows the "Beatrice" on Allston's list is the small "Italian Shepherd Boy" (1819) (Pl. XLVIII) painted for the Borland family and now in the Detroit Institute of Arts. It introduces another aspect of the image of reverie which was to be still more characteristic of his final American period. A young boy sits relaxed in a pose of reverie within the half-light of the forest. The fine plastic grace of

this figure is a reminder that Allston, like Prud'hon, belonged to the first generation of romantic painters who were still in touch with the sculptural ideal of classicism. Indeed, Allston had known Thorwaldsen and Canova in Rome. His studio in Cambridgeport was filled with casts of antique sculpture; and the figure drawings made at Rome were carefully preserved and often used for the poses of figures in the compositions of these final years in America. But the plastic idea of the picture is absorbed in its harmony of color and light. The ruddy figure and gray drapery are luminous against the warm darkness of the trees. At the right the light shines like dull gold in a vista within the forest where a stream forms a little waterfall to fill the silence with its sound.

Allston's conception of a picture was that it should not merely present an image to the eye but give the mind food for reverie. It was a new kind of picture in American art. He had freed himself from the "story" of his subject to create an effect wholly of light, color, and the plastic image, as the great Venetian painters whom he admired had done. Yet this picture is entirely personal and entirely of its time. Allston must himself have felt that he had achieved something, for a few years later he returned to the same theme on a larger scale in the "Italian Shepherd Boy" painted for the Hooper family, who still own it.

In the same year (1819) he began a subject from the Old Testament, "Jeremiah Dictating His Prophecy of the Destruction of Jerusalem to the Scribe Baruch" (Pl. XLIX). The picture was begun in the summer at Cambridge, where Allston had gone to escape an epidemic that had broken out near his painting room in Boston,<sup>8</sup> but it was finished during the following winter and is dated 1820. Allston returned in it to the theme of the grand, the dramatic, and the mysterious. Imposing, skilful, powerful, it is also static and dramatically unconvincing. The silent, solitary, and contemplative moods which had always been present in his work had now become predominant. In the "Jeremiah" he attempted to paint the inner inspiration lighting up the prophet's mind. The subject lacks the expressive movement which makes "The Dead Man Revived" convincing. It lacks also an expressive use of light and space, for

8. Allston to Leslie, November 15, 1819.

the figures are life-size and dominate the space, while the chiaroscuro, although handsome as color, is too diffuse to create a dramatic effect. It is an attempt to treat a grandiose subject in terms of the stillness and repose of his new period. These qualities, appropriate in the "Beatrice," are not suitable to the bold, heroic tone and the effect of moral struggle which the figure of Jeremiah was intended to suggest. It is an illustration of the difficulty which Allston was to meet when he unrolled the "Belshazzar" a year later. The delicate, dreamy mood of his later period had taken possession of him; the imposing, majestic, and awe-inspiring tone which came spontaneously for a time now had to be strained after, and the result was unconvincing.

The "Jeremiah" was painted for Channing's mother-in-law, Mrs. Gibbs, and hung for over forty years in the Gibbs dining-room on Beacon Hill. "One day," says Miss Peabody, "I told Dr. Channing that it seemed to me an inappropriate adornment of a dining-room. I had seen it first, and been profoundly impressed by it, when it was exhibited in Boylston Hall alone, in 1822, and the artist had skilfully placed it at a due distance from the eye. Dr. Channing said:—Yet Allston painted it for this place. Mrs. Gibbs said to him one day that she would give him one thousand dollars to paint a picture to hang between those two windows; and he painted this one. After her death, an English gentleman who was here to dine, heard of the price given for it from one of us, and said to Miss Gibbs that he would give her two thousand dollars for it. She found she could not part with it for that sum, and immediately sent to Allston another thousand dollars, telling him how she had found out that he should not have sold it for less."<sup>9</sup>

The same contrast between dramatic subject and dreamlike style appears in "Miriam the Prophetess," which Allston painted for David Sears in 1820. He chose the Old Testament heroine because Miriam was the name of Mrs. Sears. She is represented as singing her song of triumph over the destruction of the hosts of Pharaoh in the Red Sea. "Sound the loud timbrel o'er Egypt's dark sea, Jehovah has triumphed, his people are free." But drama and passion are lacking. Both the "Miriam" and

9. Elizabeth Palmer Peabody, *Reminiscences of Reverend William Ellery Channing*, p. 325.



the "Jeremiah" are very handsome in color: subtle, luminous, with a rich pictorial unity beyond the command of any other painter at that time on this side of the Atlantic. As decorations, these pictures set a new standard of atmospheric color in American painting. As vivid expressions of energy and passion, they lack the convincing power of the earlier dramatic pictures before 1818.

Allston returned several times to the attempt, in 1820, in "Saul and the Witch of Endor" (Pl. L) and, in 1830-31, in "Spalatro's Vision of the Bloody Hand" from Mrs. Radcliffe's *The Italian*, and perhaps in some of the other lost works of the twenties. In each the action is frozen, the passion unconvincing. It is painful to see in these pictures the conflict between the artist's gifts and temperament and a subject which he no longer intuitively understood. It was part of the struggle he went through in these years and forms a commentary on the desperate resolution with which he devoted years of labor to the "Belshazzar." On the other hand, his distinction of style and originality of feeling make the paintings which he did in his own vein remarkably successful. The subjects of these pictures are moods of reverie embodied in landscapes, in single dreaming figures, or in poetic images like the "Florimell."

In the landscapes of his old age the air of wonder and solitude which attracted Coleridge is still present, but the heroic scale and tone of excitement have given place to intimacy and to a tone of reverie. Technically, also, his late landscapes, by using glazes to create an inner luminosity of tone, are different from the early pictures in which impasto plays relatively a larger part.

The "Moonlight Landscape" (Pl. XLVI), painted in 1819, shows how Allston had grown since his early pictures in mastery of the inhabited landscape. The figures of Diana and her nymphs in the picture of that name are a charming bit of staffage in an idyl of nature's majesty and beauty; but in the moonlight landscape the figures are an essential part of the mood. The light broods over the solemn darkness of the earth. Who has seen the vastness and magical solitude of such a scene better suggested? The tiny figures of a man and woman leading a child who have stopped to question a horseman on the beach (the group is less con-

spicuous in the original than in the photograph) lend to the scene a touch of tension that is the essence of romantic art. Something is taking place within the beauty of this night. The artist does not indicate more than that: he merely gives the feeling that human life goes on within the darkness and that it is no less beautiful and no less strange than the night itself. One great difference between romantic art and that of the twentieth century was that the romantic artist wished his picture, as Allston said, to suggest something to the mind: that is, to be so rich in overtones and associations that the observer will find in it food for long reflection. The essence of artistic vigor, in his mind, was the power of suggestion. The artist's invention, he said, in his *Lectures on Art*, is not limited to a choice of shapes and colors, or even to the observation of things seen. Its purpose is to create in the work of art an image of experience—which means our whole experience, including necessarily not only the exercise of sight but also our intellectual and moral life. Unless the work of art does this, by Allston's definition, it lacks reality, for reality can be nothing less than the re-creation of the wholeness of experience which includes our perception both of nature without and of our inner life.

It is hard to realize today how advanced this picture was in style for the time it was painted. Fifty years later, when an atmospheric and coloristic technique had again spread throughout the world of art, almost anyone could learn to paint with color which was also light. But in the 1820's it was unknown not only to American painting but to all schools of art. It was a new mode of perception which between 1820 and 1830 became the problem of creation for the most important progressive minds in painting—Constable and Corot, Delacroix and Turner. The fact that each of these artists was at work on quite a different technical solution to the problem shows how personal this way of painting still was: it was by no means yet the common property of painting or embodied in a known and accepted technique. Allston painted the "Moonlight Landscape" with his own technique of underpaint and glazes. It is a very simple composition in color—a contrast of warm and cool, the warm browns of the earth changing into the blues of the distant mountains which lead into the blues and whites of the sky—but the colors are

reflected one within the other in a fine atmospheric unity. It is a very quiet painting, but in its silent way it creates an impression that lingers in the mind and long afterward recurs to memory with surprising force.

The "Landscape, Evening" (Pl. LI), painted for his friend Warren Dutton in 1821, illustrates this same atmospheric style and grave, dream-like mood. What place is depicted here? No one can say. He represents a lifetime's experience and love of nature distilled into one ideal image. Two years later, in 1823, there appeared in New York a portfolio of engravings with a significant title, *The Hudson River Portfolio*, published by Henry I. Megary, with engravings by Asher B. Durand after water-color views of Hudson River scenery by William G. Wall. Its scenes are portraits, often rude enough, of the Palisades and other famous sights along the river. But out of this simple portrait impulse Durand and his fellows were later to develop the landscape of romantic realism. Allston's romantic idealism was a remarkable but solitary phenomenon, without immediate influence upon American landscape painting.

The "Italian Landscape" (Pl. LII), painted about 1830 for the mayor of Boston, Samuel A. Eliot, illustrates these same qualities exercised in another direction. Like the landscapes which Corot began to paint after his third Italian journey in 1840, it is a reverie upon the serenity and grace of the Italian landscape. While Corot's silver-green *souvenirs* are part of the development of French painting toward the cool palette of Impressionism, Allston created for American painting a warmer and more golden palette, which came down through William Page and Alexander to Inness, forming a separate and distinct tradition of atmospheric style. The shimmering freshness of tint in the figures, with their luminous, madder-red shadows, is like a Delacroix of the sixties; while the delicate nuances of light in the sunset sky seem to belong to the early stages of Impressionism. There had never before been such a style in America, nor was there to be such an understanding of luminous color again until the century was in its last decades. The drawing has a broad, monumental simplicity characteristic of Allston. Yet within that breadth of effect each tree, each figure, each branch or leaf, is marked by a

delicate rhythm of brush stroke which creates the equally characteristic tone of grace and tenderness.

Allston's art was an art of memory. He had studied nature closely and with the keenest affection. His images of the beauty of a tree against the sky, of a plant growing by the roadside, or of distant effects of light over mountain and sea are images distilled by time and affection and translated into the harmonies of art. This is the record of an experience of nearly twenty-five years before, and an experience which many other artists and travelers have also felt. For that very reason it is the best evidence which can be offered that Allston had accomplished what is the most difficult of all things an artist must do. An artist must at last learn simply to be himself, to see life for himself, and to express its meaning as he sees it from his own point in space and time. Perhaps there may be other people more clever, more striking, more dramatic. Perhaps he is not, after all, a world-embracing personality. Nonetheless, if an artist will simply utter what life means to him in the solitude of his own spirit, then a man becomes a true artist and does a work which, whether great or small, will be a work of art. This sounds simple and banal. Yet it is the final and most difficult feat which only a handful ever accomplish. Most artists are too clever, they have seen too much, or they are too receptive or too anxious to impress and to be great. It is too large a temptation, seeing some other energetic, clever, and successful talent—Picasso or Dali, Jacques Louis David or Sir Thomas Lawrence—to yield to the spell and try to be like that other man. But if you are following someone, as Corot observed in his journal, you are always behind. The only way to be strong is to accept one's self and to bring one's own gift to life modestly and honestly, as Allston has done here.

The mingled grandeur, tranquillity, and grace of the "Italian Landscape" made a great impression upon those who saw it in Allston's exhibit of 1839. It had the quality of reflection which meant so much to the spirit of that generation: the quality of experience seen through the veil of memory and transposed to another plane by having lived long within the mind. Most of those who have left comments on the exhibit consider it one of the culminating points of his landscape painting.

James Freeman Clarke published a poem upon it in the first number of the *Dial*; and Emerson, who found the figures in that exhibit too bland for his soaring conception of art, discovered himself in harmony with the landscapes. It is worth noting, as an example of Allston's skill in the *inhabited landscape*, how the people in this pictured world really live: they are not mere staffage figures put in as spots of color to help the composition, but each has its own delicate note of inner life to give it its own reason for existence.

The same felicity in making human beings and nature exist together and create the tone of a scene is demonstrated in the American landscape of 1835. Its vaporous style curiously foreshadows Corot's late work, although Allston's golden, warm tonality is very different from the Frenchman's silver-grays. Allston gave it a long title, emphasizing its native subject: "Landscape, American Scenery: Time, Afternoon, with a Southwest Haze" (Pl. LV). He chose one of those brown October days when the atmosphere of New England has a softness that is close to the light of the Roman landscape. But the peculiarity of this picture is its air of remoteness. The hunter in fringed shirt, riding his gray horse through the ford, and his dog swimming before him, only seem to deepen the solitude. In the "Italian Landscape" he had painted the amiability of the European landscape, where human life has been part of nature for so long that both have grown into a harmony. Here, on the contrary, he is painting that breath of the wilderness which, as Thoreau observed, yet lingered in every woodland, even where the American soil had been longest settled, and which made men seem still only temporary sojourners. There are other titles of American landscapes among Allston's pictures that have not been found. If and when these are recovered, it will be interesting to see whether this interpretation of the American landscape is found in them also.

The other great theme of the American period was the type of dreaming figure which I have called the "image of reverie." The "Beatrice" and the "Italian Shepherd Boy" of 1819 were the earliest. The second "Mother and Child" of 1828, which was owned briefly by the Boston Athenaeum (purchased 1829, sold 1837) and engraved by Cheney for

*The Token* of 1836, may also be considered one. The "Spanish Girl in Reverie," painted before 1831, is not Allston's most interesting picture of the type, but, because it hangs in the Metropolitan Museum and because Isham illustrated it, it is perhaps the best known of all Allston's pictures. The "Una Sleeping in a Wood" at the Whitney Museum also is one of this group; but it is unfinished, showing only the underpainting without the glazes which were to complete it. The later examples of this type of composition—"A Tuscan Girl" (1831), "Lorenzo and Jessica" (1832) (Pl. LIII), "The Evening Hymn" (1835) (Pl. LIV), and "Rosalie" (1835) (Pl. LVI)—are all in private collections and unfamiliar to the general public.

These small, quiet pictures are one of the most characteristic expressions of Allston's romantic feeling. The later they are in date, the more glazing takes the place of impasto. The glazes grow deeper and more glowing, the lights more luminous, and the shadows more filled with color.

In 1855 an excellent critic of the next generation, W. J. Stillman, started in New York City a magazine of art called the *Crayon*. His point of view was a Ruskinian truth to nature which he called "common sense," in which he foreshadowed the taste of objective realism. Stillman visited Boston during 1855 to report on the artistic life of the city, and his reactions to Allston's work are interesting. As might be expected, he disliked the dramatic narratives like "Belshazzar's Feast" and thought them "in every respect unfortunate." At first he criticized Allston for "an indecision—a want of the glorious boldness and dogmatic way of working which a man falls into when he feels the fullest inspiration of art." After he had stayed longer in Boston and had grown more familiar with his pictures, he changed his mind. "I have seen more of Allston since my last date," he wrote, "and begin to understand the attachment the Bostonians have for his work. There is an atmosphere of quiet grace about them, a gentleness and reserve of power which must represent the man. That which at first seemed indecision now seems a dreaminess, as though the picture wore a reverie of form and color. In this I find the individuality which I missed at first. The Rosalie first made me understand this, and

once seen, it grew clearer with each picture I saw."<sup>10</sup> It is a fair description of the reaction one may still have today toward these pictures.

It has often been observed that, the better paintings are, the simpler they are. This is not because simplicity is in itself an end in art but because good pictures achieve an inner harmony so complete that they take on an air of inevitability. This is the meaning of Degas's remark that a good painting is a platitude.<sup>11</sup> Reactions to the dreamlike mood of Allston's late pictures may vary with the individual. But, from the point of view of quality, these pictures achieve a limpid simplicity which yet has depth. The love of solitude, of stillness, and the grace which developed in his art in these American years to the point of extinguishing the dramatic vein found their appropriate expression in these landscapes and small images of reverie.

Where these qualities are concerned, Allston's powers of invention were by no means exhausted. There are four large compositions with many figures begun in the 1830's which, though left unfinished at his death, are among the most significant of his late works. These are "Titania's Court" (before 1837), "Ship in a Squall" (before 1837), "The Death of King John" (ca. 1837), and "Heliodorus Driven from the Temple."

"Titania's Court" (Pl. LVII) represents the moment in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Act II, scene 3. *Another part of the Wood. Enter TITANIA, with her Train*) when Titania says:

Come, now a roundel and a fairy song;  
Then for a third part of a minute, hence;  
Some to kill cankers in the musk-rose buds,  
Some war with rere-mice for their leathern wings,  
To make my small elves coats, and some keep back  
The clamorous owl, that nightly hoots, and wonders  
At our quaint spirits. Sing me now asleep;  
Then to your offices, and let me rest.

The evanescent charm of this is transposed into a play of floating movement which is one of Allston's most felicitous inventions. Clearly he

10. W. J. Stillman, "Boston," *Crayon*, I (1855), 155 and 171.

11. Quoted by Paul Valéry, "Quelques notes," *Travaux des étudiants du groupe d'histoire de l'art de la faculté des lettres de Paris* (Paris: Institut d'Art et d'Archéologie, 1928).

still could use movement with all his former skill when it was to express something within the range of his new mood. Movement seems to have been the keynote also of "Gabriel Setting the Watch at the Gates of Paradise" (1833) and of "Fairies on the Seashore, Disappearing at Sunrise" (before 1837), both of which are preserved in some preliminary drawings of great charm as well as in the engravings of fragments from the compositions in the *Outlines and Sketches*.

Movement is also the basis of the impressive chalk drawings of "Heliodorus Driven from the Temple" and the "Ship in a Squall" (Pl. LVIII). These are merely Allston's preliminary chalk studies upon canvas covered with a brown priming coat, but the last named is one of the noblest and most haunting of all his landscapes. The whole image is of movement of sea and clouds and swaying vessel, in which the subtle and flexible chalk line achieves a memorable poetry of motion.

Allston left many unfinished works. This can partly be attributed to the slow and laborious technique adopted in his last years, which occasioned many delays and halts. Several accounts of this technique, taken down by different hands, show how substantial a change had taken place since his English period. For the big dramatic pictures down to and including the "Belshazzar," he first made one or more small but highly finished studies of the whole composition and perhaps life-size studies of certain details—a head or a single figure. He then began the whole composition anew on the final scale. A change seems to have occurred with the "Uriel" and "Elijah in the Desert." He completed these two pictures in eight weeks, which does not seem to imply elaborate preliminary studies. After his return to America he no longer made finished preliminary studies. He worked out his composition directly upon the canvas, first in line, then in tone, and finally in color. If he made preliminary studies of details, these were small, free drawings in black chalk in his notebooks, merely trying out the general movement of a figure or of a group. The picture was begun in chalk upon canvas which had received a dark priming coat (like the "Ship in a Squall"). He went over this with a brush dipped in vermilion or umber to fix the outlines and to wash in the broad tones. Sometimes he made further



modifications of outline at this stage in chalk and again fixed these with the brush. Then the broad masses of color were added in a solid impasto and allowed to dry. This was the underpaint upon which he built the final effect in glazes. (The "Una" in the Whitney Museum represents this stage.) Sarah Clarke, a pupil of the 1830's, says that he then sometimes put the canvas away to dry for as long as a year, to let the impasto become perfectly hard before adding the glazes. Finally, the painting was glazed and the details added by painting into the glaze. The composition thus achieved completion at several stages along the way, in chalk, outline, and wash. Frequently he seems never to have felt the need to carry an idea farther than one of these stages. The "Ship in a Squall" is complete as a chalk drawing, and no one would regret that it was left as it is. "Titania's Court" is complete at the stage of brush outline and delicate washes and again is a characteristic and distinguished work. When a picture had advanced as far as the underpaint in oil, however, it was out of balance until it received the final glazes and details. But the long delay while the paint was allowed to dry sometimes meant that the work was never resumed. An exception is "The Death of King John" (Pl. LIX), which is in the unfinished stage of underpaint in color and yet is still effective. It is broadly laid on in areas of red, white, brown, blue, and black. The color is less subtle and no doubt less luminous than it would have been with the final glazes; but the sketch achieves a stern and tragic mood that is interesting.

These pictures were laid aside for another greater effort. Late in November, 1839,<sup>12</sup> Allston unrolled the huge canvas of "Belshazzar's Feast" again in the studio at Cambridgeport. Until 1841 he was hard at work upon it and would allow no one to enter the studio. Then a long illness intervened, and he was confined to his room by sickness for the greater part of the winter of 1841-42.<sup>13</sup> When his health permitted, he went back to work again and made much progress. He was at work upon it all the day of his death.

As one views the large canvas of "Belshazzar's Feast" today (Pl.

12. Allston to Cogdell, December 5, 1839.

13. Allston to Leslie, October 11, 1842.

XL), the unfinished portions such as King Belshazzar and the heads of the magicians are so conspicuous that it is hard to visualize the picture as a whole. But if one compares the final conception with the early sketches, one can see, I believe, that Allston had found the solution to his problem. The aim of this last revision was to create a tone of hushed and tragic solemnity (like that in "The Death of King John") instead of the dramatic conception of the early sketches. All the forms have been broadened and made heavier. These figures begin to remind one of Giotto's massive monumentality rather than of Raphael's grace. The movement is made slow, ponderous, a mere suggestion instead of the convulsive, dramatic movement he had first visualized as like the shrinking of a wounded spider. To emphasize the change, he now introduced a new figure of a kneeling girl among the group of magicians at the right. The graceful, easy movement of this one figure is emphasized by the light upon her head and shoulders. The other massive figures stand about her like columns in the somber half-light, so statuesque that the slightest suggestion of movement in the turn of a head or the glint of an eye has eloquence. The light alone gleams dramatically through the solemn hush. It is a conception which could have created an effect of monumental grandeur that no other American mural painting has ever shown.

Allston's last act on the day of his death was to prepare to paint over the figure of the king in order to make it still more massive. When his friends entered the locked studio after his death, they found that he had just blotted out the figure of Belshazzar, pumiced the surface smooth, and covered it with a coat of solid paint in preparation for painting the figure over on a large scale. The present right hand of Belshazzar is all that exists of what that later figure was to be: the remainder is what was found under the coat of paint when, after grave deliberation, this was removed. Belshazzar's hand and the upraised hand of Daniel bring to mind a remark of Thomas Cole, which Emerson put in his *Journal* (April 7, 1840), that no one in this country could draw a hand except Allston.

The sudden death of the artist whom his own generation believed the

greatest that had appeared in America, leaving his famous work unfinished, made a deep impression. It was a tragedy whose touch of the inexplicable made it seem in some way symbolic, both of Allston as an individual and as a type of the artist in America. Symbolic—but of what? When the veiled picture was at last unveiled and his friends saw the figure of Belshazzar (which Allston had sometime before said he had finished to his satisfaction) covered by a coat of dark-brown paint, Dana, the poet, said, "That is his shroud." He had been Allston's most intimate friend and unswerving admirer. The blot of paint was to him the symbol of a mysterious doom upon this gifted man.

Hawthorne noted the event in his notebook and, in a curious story, "The Artist of the Beautiful," in *Mosses from an Old Manse*, made it a symbol of the artist's solitude and of the fragility of the thing which the artist tries to realize. "It is requisite for the ideal artist," he wrote, "to possess a force of character that seems hardly compatible with its delicacy; he must keep his faith in himself while the incredulous world assails him with its utter disbelief, he must stand up against mankind and be his own sole disciple, both as respects his genius and the objects to which it is directed. . . . He [the artist] was incited to toil the more diligently by an anxiety lest death should surprise him in the midst of his labors. This anxiety, perhaps, is common to all men who set their hearts upon anything so high, in their own view of it, that life becomes of importance only as conditional to its accomplishment. History affords many an example where the most precious spirit, at any particular epoch manifested in human shape, has gone hence untimely, without space allowed him, so far as mortal judgment could discern, to perform his mission on earth. . . . The painter—as Allston did—leaves half his conception on the canvas to sadden us with its imperfect beauty."

The following generation began to take it not as an example of the mystery of our life's imperfection but as a sign of the impossibility of being an artist in America. "You and I," wrote William Wetmore Story to Lowell, during the winter when he was trying to make up his mind to abandon a successful career in the law and go, with wife and children, to study sculpture in Italy, "you and I want an audience which is intel-

ligent and sympathetic, which can understand and stamp what is good and what is bad, we do not write for idiots or for bores; we gather strength from sympathy; we must have our sounding-board to give effect to the tune we play. Allston starved spiritually in Cambridgeport; he fed upon himself. There was nothing congenial without, and he turned all his powers inward and drained his memory dry. His works grew thinner and vaguer everyday, and in his old age he ruined his great picture. I know no more melancholy sight than he was, so rich and beautiful a nature, in whose veins the south ran warm, which was born to have grown to such a height and to have spread abroad such fragrantcy, stunted on the scant soil and withered by the cold winds of that fearful Cambridgeport. I look at his studio whenever I pass with a heart-pang. It's a terrible ghost—all is in fact ghostlike here. There's no such thing as flesh-and-blood; we hob-a-nob with spirits freely. We love nothing, we criticize everything. Even the very atmosphere is critical. Every twig is intensely defined against the sky. The sky itself is hard and distant. Earth never takes the hue of its heaven. The heart grows into stone. The devil-side of enthusiasm (irritability) possesses us. There is no hearty love of everything, for we are afraid of making a mistake. We love unhappiness."<sup>14</sup>

But Allston himself did not complain that the world had frustrated him. Emerson noted in his *Journal* (October 6, 1837): "A great man must not grumble at his contemporaries. God saith to him what the poet said,—

The piece, you say, is incorrect. Why take it.  
I'm all submission, What you'd have it, make it.

If you don't like the work make it to suit you. All true men have done so before you. Mr. Allston heroically says, 'His art must be sufficient to the artist.' "

Story wrote as a man heartsick for the life of an artist and homesick for Italy. He was part of a generation which, not in New England alone but all over the world, was beginning to feel weary of familiar ways and to long for new things and for other lands. His bitter words may help

14. W. W. Story to James Russell Lowell, Boston, December 30, 1855.

#### WASHINGTON ALLSTON

to illustrate how sharply the intellectual climate of life seems to have changed at the midpoint of the century. In New England the delicate poetry of introspection, the dreamy quietism of the twenties and thirties, had vanished and could not be recaptured. Hawthorne, when he wrote a later preface to the *Twice-told Tales*, confessed that he no longer liked his early work.

But this does not mean that that earlier age did not take its place as a moment in the spiritual development of this country and leave its mark upon our culture. It enlarged the sentiments and perceptions of a new generation and deepened their awareness of life. Probably no American painter has entered more widely into the life of the most sensitive minds of his time than Washington Allston did into the period of our early romantic culture.

## Chapter Twelve

### The Mind Turns Inward

A MAN coming from a center of active production to a quiet, isolated spot, as Allston did in removing from London to Boston, is likely to produce less and to think more about the nature of his art and the reason for its existence. This is so natural a result of such a move that it would in itself have been reason for a change in the character and quality of his work.<sup>1</sup> In the literary atmosphere of Boston his attention was drawn to writing. Side by side with his late pictures went a certain amount of verse. There is both a poem and a painting of "The Young Troubadour," of "Rosalie," and of "A Spanish Girl in Reverie." When Mrs. Jameson asked him whether the picture or the poem took shape in his mind first, he answered that he could not say: the poem grew along with the painting. About half of his published verse was written after his final return to America.

The power of analytical thought, which Coleridge had found so remarkable in Allston in his youth (see p. 2), remained subordinate so long as he was in the full flush of production. But the change of environment, accentuated by the deep disappointment of the "Belshazzar," had the effect of turning his mind inward, and in the 1830's he began the long labor of reflective thought about the nature of art which resulted in the consistent and closely reasoned structure of his theory of art. Along with this went the writing of his aphorisms, which, Mrs. Jameson says, he fastened on the walls of his studio, "some on fragments of

1. The article on Allston in the *Dictionary of American Biography* says that, with this change, his career as an artist was over and suggests that the reason was perhaps "his pietistic religion." The remark shows a rather depressing lack of culture. How, according to this view, were Botticelli, Fra Angelico, and Michelangelo able to be artists, since they also possessed a pietistic religion?

paper stuck up with a wafer or pin, some on the wall itself. They were to serve, he said, as 'texts for reflection before he began his day's work.' <sup>2</sup> There are also among his papers some fragments of an unpublished essay on religion. But the most important and the most neglected of all his writings are the *Lectures on Art*, which were finally published posthumously in 1850.

Painting and abstract reflective thought are mutually exclusive occupations. It is evident from the descriptions which have come down to us of Allston's life in the 1830's that his habits grew more and more to be those of a reflective thinker rather than of an active painter.

His life during his last years in Cambridgeport was described by his nephew, Jared Flagg, who studied with him in the thirties: "He retained many of the habits formed during his residence abroad. It was his custom to turn night into day, a custom noticeable as far back as his boarding-school life in Newport. . . . He seldom went to bed before two o'clock in the morning. He would usually rise at about ten, make an elaborate toilet, and then prepare his breakfast, which consisted of the strongest coffee and some slight relish, like a bit of salt fish or ham, and an egg with bread and butter. He never altogether gave up his bachelor habits, and would allow no one to prepare his breakfast or his bed but himself.

"Immediately after breakfast he would light his cigar and take some book on art, which he would read for a while in preparation for his painting. About one o'clock he would enter his studio, put down his pitcher of drinking-water which he always brought with him through the streets from his house. Making out his palette occupied him not less than half an hour, as he had always a system of tints to mix and spread out on a scrupulously clean, large mahogany palette. Then he would take out his picture, place it on the easel, light his cigar, and sit down in front of it, seemingly wrapped in pleasing anticipation of what he expected to do. It is obvious that, with this deliberate preparation, his hours for work in winter were few. After painting he would carefully clean his palette and return to the contemplation of his picture, which would continue

2. Anna Jameson, "Washington Allston," *Athenaeum*, 1844, p. 40.

generally until quite dark. Then with his brushes and his pitcher in his hands, he would start for his house; and so abstracted was he frequently, that upon reaching it, he would return to see whether he had locked his studio door.

"After readjusting his toilet, he would enter the dining-room, which was also his sitting-room. There he would usually find some friend or friends whose intimacy rendered invitations superfluous, with whom he would spend an hour or more in cheerful conversation and the enjoyment of a well-provided and tempting table, on which there was always sherry wine.

"He was quite an epicure and at times greatly enjoyed describing dinners in Paris, the memory of which seemed to delight him. The cloth removed, the wine would be placed on the table, the cigar lighted, and reinforced occasionally by a few friends dropping in, the night's conversation would continue. About nine o'clock tea, toast, cake and preserves would be served."<sup>3</sup>

It was this genial, quiet existence that the next generation saw and remembered. Longfellow, Story, Sumner, Felton, T. G. Appleton, and Lowell, upon whose recollections of him the late nineteenth century based its knowledge, knew him as a charming old man, enfeebled in health but rich in thoughts and memories, working slowly away in his close-locked studio. They thought that they were describing an artist, but what they saw was a philosopher.

When his *Lectures on Art* came out in 1850, there was no American tradition of philosophical art criticism to deal with them. After a few well-intentioned reviews, they passed into silence and were forgotten. But Allston is the only American theorist on art who combined the experience of a creative artist with a philosophical culture. He had been in touch with philosophical idealism through Coleridge, and he had, as the *Lectures* show, a methodical mind. His book is thus different from the collections of illuminating intuitions about art mingled with practical precepts which were written by Greenough, La Farge, and Henri, as it was different from the histories of Dunlap, Tuckerman, and Isham.

3. Jared B. Flagg, *Washington Allston, Life and Letters*, pp. 242-43.



This is not the place to give a summary of his *Lectures*, but I shall mention two points: his theory of art as expression and his attitude toward the question of originality and tradition.

Allston approached the nature of the arts by dealing first with the element of pleasure in them. The great obstacle to an understanding of art as creative expression has always been this element of pleasure, upon which the notion of Beauty was founded. Beauty is what pleases—art is the form of Beauty whose pleasure is free from the wish to possess or the need to act which are aroused by other things that please us. (“*Id cuius ipsa apprehensio placet*,” said Thomas Aquinas.) The whole structure of aesthetic theories of Beauty has arisen from the desire to give to this element of personal pleasure, which has all the mutability and baffling fluctuations of personal taste, the objective and universal validity of a philosophical concept.

But Allston dealt with the element of pleasure in art as simply as the Greeks defined happiness—as the pleasure arising from the right use of our best faculties. “It pleased our Creator,” says Allston, “when he endowed us with appetites and functions by which to sustain the economy of life, at the same time to annex to their exercise a sense of pleasure. . . . Were man a mere animal, the very act of living, in his natural or healthy state, would be to him a continuous enjoyment. But he is also a moral and an intellectual being; and in like manner is the healthful condition of these, the nobler parts of his nature, attended with something more than a consciousness of the mere process of existence. To the exercise of his intellectual faculties and moral attributes the same benevolent law has superadded a sense of pleasure,—of a kind, too, in the same degree transcending the highest bodily sensation as must that which is immortal transcend the perishable.”<sup>4</sup> This he called the “law of mental pleasures”—mental to indicate that the object delighting the eye or ear was not in itself the cause but simply the *occasion* of the pleasure, whose effect arises from within the mind. The agency which produces this effect is a single intuitive universal principle or living power which is Harmony.

The point is that he placed the source of the pleasure of art in the

4. *Lectures on Art and Poems*, pp. 11–12.

mind, not in the object of art. The capacity to feel that pleasure is what he called an "inborn idea"—an instinctive, intuitive faculty which exists to a greater or lesser degree in all of us, but which is aroused by objects, by people, by actions, by ideas, in varying degrees according to the idiosyncracies of our nature and our powers of apprehension. The pleasure of harmony is in all instances free from personal desire (except inasmuch as the real business of life is to attain to a satisfying state), and its condition is that of *impletion*, where nothing can be added or taken away.<sup>5</sup>

The element of pleasure which has been the basis of the theory of Beauty having thus been defined as a function of the mind of the observer, a response to a relationship or harmony observed both in nature and in art, he was set free to consider objectively what qualities distinguish art from nature. Art, as he defined it, was described purely in terms of creation. He found in it four characteristics: originality, human or poetic truth, invention, and unity.<sup>6</sup>

1. "Originality means anything (admitted by the mind as true) which is peculiar to the Author, and which distinguishes his production from that of all others." But originality is not mere novelty. The power to originate is the power to assimilate what is foreign or external into our own nature. No two minds are ever found to be identical. There is something in each individual mind which gives its peculiar hue to every impression from outward objects, although neither the power to assimilate nor the power to reproduce the precise images or feelings as they exist in one's self exist in the same degree in different men. But anyone who can reproduce these precise images or feelings as they exist in himself, however light or trifling they might be in some instances, is to that extent an originator.

2. Human or poetic truth is truth which may be said to exist exclusively in and for the mind, as distinguished from the truth of things in the natural or external world. The test of truth in art is not the latter kind of truth but simply truth of feeling.<sup>7</sup> It cannot be the truth of things

5. *Ibid.*, pp. 70-73.

6. *Ibid.*, pp. 75 ff.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 79.

in the natural or external world, because no work of art can be a facsimile of a natural object. There is, on the contrary, an "eternal and insuperable difference between Art and Nature." Yet we derive a satisfaction from art which is similar, not to say equal, to that which we derive from nature. This is demonstrated by experience. The reason is the existence in art of another and distinctive kind of truth equivalent to the admitted difference. This human or poetic truth is something *from within ourselves*, which is reflected back by the object. This truth does not reside in the understanding or reflective faculties or in the moral principle. It is simply life—"the self-projecting, realizing power" of the life of a human being, which is ever present, ever acting and giving judgment on the instant on all things corresponding with its inscrutable self. The epithet "human" is given to this kind of truth to mark out to us that its sphere of action is "the mysterious intercourse between man and man; whether the medium consist in words or colors, in thought or form, or anything else on which the human agent may impress, be it in a sign only, his own marvelous life." How that communication actually operates is unknown: "It is enough to know that there is that within man which is ever answering to that without, as life to life—which must be life and which must be true."<sup>8</sup>

3. Invention is any unpracticed way of presenting a subject and has two forms. (a) Natural invention consists in new combinations of known forms. Both a cottage interior by Ostade and "The Death of Ananias" by Raphael are examples of such new combinations of forms observed in nature. (b) Ideal invention consists in embodying, from the known but fragmentary, the possible or unknown. It has its sphere of action in the world of ideas. Caliban in *The Tempest*, Sir Joshua Reynolds' "Puck," the Farnese "Hercules," the "Apollo Belvedere" and the visions of Michelangelo are Allston's examples. Invention is the product of imagination; it is based on originality and tested by poetic truth.

4. Unity is the synthesis of all, which presents to the mind the idea of a whole. The imagination demands a whole—not a single part must be felt to be wanting. If it is objected that we often enjoy many things

8. *Ibid.*, p. 87.

in nature which seem to us fragmentary, "nothing in Nature can be fragmentary, except in the seeming and then to the understanding only—to the feelings never. For a grain of sand, no less than a planet, being an essential part of that mighty whole which we call the universe, can not be separated from the idea of the world without a positive act of the reflective faculties, an act of volition; but until then even a grain of sand can not cease to imply it." Unity in a work of art is the equivalent of this living cement diffused through nature, "binding all things in one, so that no part can be contemplated that does not, of necessity, even though unconsciously to us, act on the mind with reference to the whole."

If we would communicate the true effects of nature in a work of art, we must have recourse to another, though similar, principle—harmony. In order to achieve harmony, two conditions are required: (*a*) the personal modification of every part and (*b*) the unity of the parts of such an interdependence that they shall appear to us as essential, one to one, and all to each.

In essence this is a theory of art as (1) creation and (2) communication. On the one hand, the old theories of art as imitation and that of Beauty as a quality in the object contemplated are plainly set aside. "The several characteristics, Originality, Poetic Truth, Invention, each imply a something not inherent in the objects imitated (i.e.: represented) but which must emanate alone from the mind of the Artist."<sup>9</sup> On the other hand, the response to a work of art is described as arising from a universal principle essential to the human mind, called "Human" or "Poetic Truth," which is independent both of the will and of the reflective faculties and whose operation is imperative (though widely different in its degree of activity in different individuals), because it is "the life, or truth within, answering to the life, or rather its sign, before us."<sup>10</sup> The aim of the artist is, then, not to please but to be true to that life within us.

It is not necessary to explain to those familiar with the course of aesthetic theory in modern times how interesting it is to find such a theory put forward in 1840.

9. *Ibid.*, p. 106.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 108.

The second question of originality and tradition was one of far-reaching importance both for the romantic period itself and for its aftereffects upon the arts. The romantic period introduced the notion of the rebel genius and the modern use of the word "originality" to describe the creative power which we value in an artist's work. This concentration upon one element of creation, added to the violent conflicts which each generation of artists has since felt called upon to wage against its predecessors and especially the intense stylistic experiment of the early twentieth century, has associated the concept of originality (creation) in modern thought with novelty of style. But there is actually nothing in the nature of creation which favors dissimilarity over similarity in the thing created. Each baby born into the world does not have a different arrangement of arms and legs, nor does each seed that sprouts in the earth come up a new species. In the same way, to be valid, ideas and emotions and images within the human consciousness do not need to be altogether unlike what has been thought or felt before. There are, in fact, epochs in the history of art—such as the European Middle Ages or Far Eastern or Indian art—when novelty was positively disliked; yet this does not prevent them from being epochs of remarkable creative power. Allston's theory of art, which has just been discussed, defined originality as something very much larger than novelty of form. Originality consisted in the depth and vitality of the artist's feeling and in his ability to express that effectively in his work. Since no individual is exactly like another, the expression of that "life within" must, if successful, necessarily bear the stamp of originality. This is a conception that applies as well to the maker of a medieval madonna as to the founder of a new style of painting, especially when considered with the other elements of creation—poetic truth, invention, and harmony.

The romantic notion of the genius-as-rebel and the supreme value given to newness are not merely part of a theoretical debate. They were translations into theory of great changes in the climate of the soul so deep-seated as to constitute alterations in the process of creation itself. No one who deals with the period of art from 1760 to 1830 can escape the question of its weakness. For, taking the Western world as a whole,

this period left the arts weaker rather than stronger at its close. This is a remarkable contradiction which sets that period off from all others. Normally in the history of art the appearance of a new source of inspiration is accompanied by an outburst of stylistic development, by which a fresh form is created to express the new perceptions. In this period alone new inspirations seemed to bring a weakening of the power to execute. The great painters of the later nineteenth century, especially in France, where the struggle to create was most conscious of the theoretical questions involved, were unanimous in feeling that their task was to *rebuild* their art, to find the way again. What was it that had been lost? These questions must be in the background of one's thoughts as one looks at any artist of that time. Nor are they without meaning for ourselves, for we are still living in the period initiated then, and the arts yet vibrate with the oscillations set in motion by the violent changes of that time.

The usual answer to these questions is that the period from 1760 to 1830 was the beginning of modern eclecticism, when artists lost touch with the present in trying to go back and imitate the past. But in this form the answer is too simple, for the past is not an enemy of artistic creation. The paintings of Mengs or Jacques Louis David took their subjects from the history of a distant age, but so did the paintings of Giotto, which represent scenes from the Bible, or from the life of St. Francis a century before Giotto was born. Michelangelo never represented contemporary life; hardly more than a small fraction of all the painting from the fourteenth to the seventeenth centuries did deal with contemporary subjects. The romantic revival studied the forms of medieval art—but Donatello and Michelangelo studied antique sculpture, and Cézanne studied Signorelli and Poussin. Yet Giotto, Donatello, Michelangelo, and Cézanne are typical examples of artists who set in motion powerful forward impulses and were helped, not hindered, by the past in doing so.

It is necessary to distinguish among three things—learning from the past, deriving inspiration from the past, and imitating the past. All three were going on within the period of classical and romantic idealism, as

they have gone on through the history of art, always with such unvarying results that we would suppose they would by now be clearly distinguished instead of being constantly confused. The difference between the painting of the fourteenth to the sixteenth centuries and painting in 1760–1830 is the difference between the first two of these and the third, or imitation of the past which I shall call *primitivism*.

The paintings of Giotto, the sculpture of Donatello, and the art of Michelangelo are in their subject matter almost entirely concerned with the past. These artists took their subjects from the story of Christianity or from classical antiquity. But, by returning with the fresh feeling of their own time to certain fundamental memories and experiences of the race, these artists founded new ages of artistic creation. This is deriving inspiration from the past, a renewal of spiritual life by a return to old sources of feeling, like cleaning leaves out of a spring so that the water will run clear again.

The history of art is also full of artists who, struggling to find a way to express a new feeling toward life, picked up a technical hint, not among their contemporaries but from somewhere far back in the tradition of art, that enabled them to solve their problem. So Nicola Pisano learned from the carvings on a Roman sarcophagus, Cézanne from pictures by Poussin and Signorelli in the Louvre, Degas from Holbein, and Michelangelo from fragments of antique sculpture in the garden of Lorenzo d'Medici and from Donatello's works scattered throughout Florence. This is learning from the past, of which all ages of painting exhibit great examples, too familiar to need mention. Both of these uses of the past are as natural and healthy as eating one's dinner.

What happened from 1760 to 1830 was different from either of these.

A living style of art is more than a manner of applying paint or modeling or building; it is a way of seeing and feeling translating itself into forms and images. And, since no individual can achieve greatness in himself alone, but only by giving form to what lies formless in the world about him, the style of an artist is at its greatest when it reflects a universal attitude toward life channeled through the genius of one exceptionally gifted man. What happened about forty years before Allston

began to paint was that a new set of abstract theories of art began to weaken and break down the connection between the artist and life. The academic critic, not the partnership of artist and society, began to set the direction of art. The instinctive harmony between the way all men saw life and the way individual artists saw it was destroyed when art began to be based no longer on a deep-rooted, traditional outlook but became an expression of a dogmatic and very limited aesthetic theory. It may seem curious to describe this movement as primitivism. Yet it was this attitude which, mingling with the healthy enthusiasms for the classical world, for the Middle Ages, and for nature, caused their weakness. The enthusiasms themselves, absorbed into contemporary life by poets like Goethe and Schiller, Wordsworth and Keats, or by painters like Constable and Turner, Allston, Corot, and Delacroix, were the basis of a rich artistic life, full of vivid inspirations and profound perceptions.

In the work of many artists all three of these enthusiasms were infected by the revolutionary discontent with the existing world that appeared at the same time as classicism. It is well known how classicism became the vehicle for an urge to abandon entirely the existing state of things and to begin over again in imitation of the distant and supposedly more correct forms of classical antiquity. Antiquity became not merely a theme for artistic reverie and inspiration, as it was for Keats. Winckelmann and a whole series of other writers held the Greeks and Romans up to the admiration of the world as a way of life to be adopted, as well as an art to delight in. Their art was regarded as excellent because it expressed their way of life, and it was this total way of life which the ardent spirits of France and Germany wished to imitate. As Desmond McCarthy pointed out, the Greeks captured the imagination of the poets of France and Germany partly by force of a poetic myth deriving from Fénelon and Rousseau, which saw the Greeks as the innocent, beautiful children of an unperverted world.<sup>11</sup> The virtuous lives and patriotism of the republican Romans became the model for the moral enthusiasm of the wave of political and social reform sweeping through the decayed monarchic

11. "The European Tradition in Literature from 1600 Onwards," in *Political and Cultural History of Europe since the Reformation* (Oxford, 1937).



states of the Continent. The inspiration of classic art was mixed with a heady impulse to turn one's self into a Greek artist or a Roman hero.

The search for nature, also, became a search for the primitive forms of art.<sup>12</sup> The praise of nature over the "artificial" quality of civilized life, which is heard so much among the romantics, was no novelty; it is nearly as old as Western civilization itself. This approbation of nature, meaning the simple, the naïve, the unspoiled, had been as common in the polished couplets of the eighteenth century as among the Romantists; it appears in Alexander Pope as well as in Rousseau, in Montaigne as well as in Wordsworth. But, for the earlier artists, nature was a sentiment to be embodied by art, a tone of feeling to be expressed with all the clear and subtle definition of their perfect technique. Romantic primitivism, on the contrary, developed the love of nature into a standard of practice for the arts. Nature was to be the measure not only of the quality of feeling to be expressed but of the modes of expression themselves. This form of primitivism had an important influence on the artist, also, by shaping the atmosphere of taste in which he had to work. John Neal, for example, who was one of the few active critics and writers on painting in America in the 1820's, made spontaneity the measure both of an artist's feeling and of his technique. Writing about an exhibition at the Boston Athenaeum, he criticized the old masters *in toto* because they did not represent people and trees and flowers as his eyes saw them in nature.<sup>13</sup>

A similar urge to throw the existing world out of the window and remake everything in the image of the Gothic was mixed with the enthusiasm for the Middle Ages. It is remarkable that, the more successful artists were in breaking with contemporary style, the less vitality there was in their art. The less archeological learning possessed by architects of the Gothic revival, so that they were forced to work freely from a general enthusiasm without specific buildings to copy, the more

12. Cf. Arthur O. Lovejoy, "On the Discrimination of Romanticism," *PMLA*, XXXIX (1924), 229 ff.

13. *Observations on American Art: Selections from the Writings of John Neal (1793-1876)*, edited, with notes, by Harold Edward Dickson (State College, Pa., 1943), pp. 46 ff.

vitality their art has. A wooden "Gothic" cottage by Alexander Jackson Downing, half native building tradition and half imagination, is alive and full of invention, while the carefully archeological buildings of more learned architects are lifeless.

Primitivism was most strongly felt where classicism and romanticism were most dogmatic. But, wherever it occurred, the result was a violent break with existing traditions of feeling, knowledge, and practice. In the case of painting this meant the destruction of the coloristic vision and the late baroque technique and the beginning of an amateurish eclecticism. The claims of inspiration were the only preparation for art that the new aesthetic allowed. Out the window went the contemporary world, and with it went the existing artistic craftsmanship, which represented not only the disciplined skills that are the enduring base of the arts but the attitude of mind that had created and handed down these skills. It was not the appearance of new enthusiasms that enfeebled the power to execute. It was the destruction of a tradition of style which expressed an organic, because historically developed, way of seeing and feeling and the substitution of a radical individualism for an instinctive harmony between the artist and the life of society.

It has already been pointed out what an advantage the undogmatic, intuitive painting in the United States and England enjoyed in retaining contact with the coloristic painting of the past. Allston was quite aware of the basic intellectual issues of his age. He not only ignored primitivism as a painter but protested vigorously against it as a critic. The notion that the "nature" with which the artist should be in harmony was opposed to art and to all that centuries of civilization have made us seemed to him an error. We are the products of a long development: the great formative ideas, experiences, and skills of past centuries have made us what we are; and the modern artist and the modern man must accept himself for what he is and go on from where history has placed him. So strongly did he believe this that the opening sentences of his *Lectures on Art* were an attack upon romantic primitivism and a defense of taking one's stand upon the existing and the contemporary.

"Next to the development of our moral nature, to have subordinated

the senses to the mind is the highest triumph of the civilized state. Were it possible to embody the present complicated scheme of society, so as to bring it before us as a visible object, there is perhaps nothing in the world of sense that would so fill us with wonder; for what is there in nature that may not fall within its limits? and yet how small a portion of this stupendous fabric will be found to have any direct, much less exclusive, relation to the actual wants of the body! It might seem, indeed, to an unreflecting observer, that our physical necessities, which, truly estimated, are few and simple, have rather been increased than diminished by the civilized man. But this is not true; for, if a wider duty is imposed on the senses, it is only to minister to the increased demands of the imagination, which is now so mingled with our every-day concerns, even with our dress, houses, and furniture, that, except with the brutalized, the purely sensuous wants might almost be said to have become extinct: with the cultivated and refined, they are at least so modified as to be no longer prominent:

“But this refining on the physical, like everything else, has had its opponents: it is declaimed against as artificial. If by artificial is meant unnatural, we cannot so consider it; but hold, on the contrary, that the whole multiform scheme of the civilized state is not only in accordance with our nature, but an essential condition to the proper development of the human being. It is presupposed by the very wants of his mind; nor could it otherwise have been, any more than could have been the cabin of the beaver, or the curious hive of the bee, without their pre-existing instincts; it is therefore in the highest sense natural, as growing out of the inherent desires of the mind.”

To those who believed that art and culture were artificial and that the knowledge of the old masters had to be abandoned for nature alone, he opposed his conception of the language of art. Art is a language which, he believed, could only be learned from its great masters. By studying great pictures, the artist learns to understand the possibilities of his language. Art and nature reinforce each other in enriching his perception of life, each clarifying and deepening the impressions derived from the other. This is simply a statement of the experience of the practicing

artist, which is, however, not so often known to the critics of art as one might suppose. Allston put his conception of originality and tradition most tersely in a letter to Leslie (May 8, 1822): "The Old Masters are after all the only masters to make a great artist—I mean an original one. For I have rarely known an artist who neglected them that did not imitate his contemporaries; and often, too, while he was deluding himself with the thought that he was confirming his study of nature. When I think thus of the Old Masters, 'tis only of their language—not their thoughts. I would not have the latter derived from any source but nature."

Into the language of art thus learned, the artist must put his own original observation and feeling. "Every original work becomes such from the infusion, so to speak, of the mind of the Author; and of this the fresh materials of nature alone seem susceptible. The imitated works of man cannot be endued with a second life, that is with a second mind—they are to the imitator as air already breathed."<sup>14</sup> Nevertheless, if artistic creation is the product of originality, it is not mere novelty or mere egoism. Its perceptions must be guided by and be in harmony with the deepest experience of the race. That experience was embodied for the artist, in Allston's opinion, in the two great traditions of art and Christianity. In the latter respect Allston was part of a movement in the opening decade of the nineteenth century which was important in determining the new direction of thought, yet which is today hardly remembered and entirely misunderstood. That was the revolt of the artists away from the skeptical and rationalistic thought of the eighteenth century to Christianity. It was a movement which appeared in all countries. Its protagonists were artists, not only Allston but Blake, Coleridge, and Wordsworth, Chateaubriand, Runge, Novalis, and the Nazarenes. Their desire as artists was to base the arts upon a more profound and spiritual view of life than that of the eighteenth century, and, to do so, they wished to revive the characteristic spiritual tradition of our civilization—Christianity. Allston, under Coleridge's influence, became an Episcopalian, as Continental artists like the North German painters in Rome became Roman Catholics. Allston was a most broad-minded and unpartisan

14. *Lectures on Art and Poems*, p. 163.

churchman, but his allegiance separated him, spiritually, by a wide gulf from Unitarian and Transcendental New England.

This shift in the tide of the imaginative life is now forgotten. But it is important to remember that romanticism turned at its start toward a mystical conception of life. And, if one realizes the significance of this movement as a moment in history, it may be possible even for the hard, self-inclosed minds of the twentieth century to comprehend how for these artists the inner experience of man, the moral struggle, seemed the distinctive characteristic of human life and how it became a theme of art. It was the light in which these artists saw the human being as human.

If we are strongly conscious today of the harm which primitivism did to the arts by breaking the continuity of perception and skill, it is because we are aware of how much that break has impoverished Western culture. We are in a position to appreciate the significance of Allston's stand upon the contemporary and organic, because historically developed, tradition.

Perhaps the principle we have to seek is foreshadowed in Whitehead's remark that organic development is the work of "two principles inherent in the very nature of things—the spirit of change, and the spirit of conservation. There can be nothing real without both."<sup>15</sup>

Allston's other writings need little comment. His poems and tales are, as Southey said, the work of a poetic mind but are imperfect in form. When *The Sylphs of the Seasons*, his first book of poems, was published in 1813, American poetry was in its infancy. The leading New England writers were the critics and historians who later founded the *North American Review*. Imaginative literature was very rare, and Allston's poems at that time deserved the attention they received. In the 1840's Rufus C. Griswold included Allston in both his well-known anthologies, *Poets of America* and *Prose Writers of America*, the former of which he dedicated to Allston. Yet a glance at these anthologies shows only how completely the scene was to change in the 1850's when the great New England writers of the next generation made themselves felt. Allston's poems and tales are the writing of a gifted amateur.

15. Alfred North Whitehead, *Science and the Modern World* (New York, 1924), p. 289.

## THE MIND TURNS INWARD

It is as a philosopher and sage that Allston has left writings still of value. In addition to his *Lectures on Art*, the aphorisms remain of interest. He became interested in the form through Fuseli's aphorisms. A few examples will show the character of Allston's thought and style.

Distinction is the consequence, never the object, of a great mind.

The love of gain never made a Painter; but it has marred many.

Reverence is an ennobling sentiment; it is felt to be degrading only by the vulgar mind, which would escape the sense of its own littleness by elevating itself into an antagonist of what is above it. He that has no pleasure in looking up is not fit so much as to look down. Of such minds are mannerists in Art; in the world, tyrants of all sorts.

There is an essential meanness in the wish *to get the better* of anyone. The only competition worthy of a wise man is with himself.

Some men make their ignorance the measure of excellence; these are, of course, very fastidious critics; for, knowing little, they can find but little to like.

The painter who seeks popularity in art closes the door upon his own genius.

Popular excellence in one age is but the *mechanism* of what was good in the preceding; in Art, the *technique*.

*Reputation* is but a synonym of *popularity*, dependent on suffrage, to be increased or diminished at the will of the voters. It is the creature, so to speak, of its particular age, or rather of a particular state of society; consequently dying with that which sustained it. Hence we can scarcely go over a page of history that we do not, as in a churchyard, tread upon some buried reputation. But fame cannot be voted down, having its immediate foundation in the essential. It is the eternal shadow of excellence, from which it can never be separated; nor is it ever made visible but in the light of an intellect kindred with that of its author....

Fame does not depend on the *will* of any man, but Reputation may be given or taken away. Fame is the sympathy of kindred intellects, and sympathy is not a subject of *willing*; while Reputation, having its source in the popular voice, is a sentence which can either be uttered or suppressed at pleasure. Reputation, being essentially contemporaneous, is always at the mercy of the envious and the ignorant; but Fame, whose very birth is *posthumous*, and which is only known *to exist by the echo of its footsteps through congenial minds*, can neither be increased nor diminished by any degree of will.

An original mind is rarely understood, until it has been *reflected* from some half-dozen congenial with it, so averse are men to admitting the *true* in an unusual form; whilst any novelty, however fantastic, however false, is greedily swallowed. Nor is this to be wondered at; for all truth demands a response, and few people care to think, yet they must have something to supply the place of thought. Every mind would appear original, if every man had the power of *projecting* his own into the mind of others.

## Chapter Thirteen

### Epilogue

ALLSTON was not a prolific painter, but he painted enough to show that he was an artist, an independent voice. "Trust to your own genius," he said to another painter; "listen to the voice within you, and sooner or later she will make herself understood, not only to you, but she will enable you to translate her language to the world, and this it is which forms the only real merit of any work of art."<sup>1</sup> His works have that merit and therefore need not be concerned with what he called "reputation" and may be left to the judgment of fame, the sympathy of kindred minds. That is the independence of all true works of art. Great or small, slight or profound, they live their own life, intact within their own enduring harmony, always open to the sympathetic mind but unconcerned when no observer is there.

Allston lived at a time when great changes were taking place in the life of the imagination. Painters, poets, sculptors, architects, and philosophers were each pursuing in his own way what they called the *ideal*. The work they did forms the beginning of the epoch in which we live. It was both a great creative age which reoriented the outlook of humanity and a period of revolutionary destruction which killed many things of value, especially in the arts. Allston is the one full-scale artist of the period in the United States. As painter, poet, and philosopher, he exhibits the life and the implications of romanticism better than any other single figure of the period from 1800 to 1840. He was the first painter to work in this country (twenty-nine of his forty-three years as a painter were

1. Quoted by Henry Greenough (reprinted in Jared B. Flagg, *Washington Allston, Life and Letters*, pp. 198-99).

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spent here) who knew the full scope of the art of painting and used it as an imaginative language. Before his time painting in the United States had meant portraits. He was the earliest American artist to do not only portraits but monumental painting (altarpieces and large murals), narratives and genre (men's actions and emotions), landscapes (the life of nature of which man is only a part), satire and humor, and, included in these, still life and architecture (the details of nature and of man's man-made setting). All this occurred at the moment American life was finding itself imaginatively. He thus has the historical interest of being the first artist in our national life who established the art of painting on its full imaginative and figurative scale, covering substantially the range of experience it had covered in the life of other countries in the past. In this enlargement of the field of painting he went on his way, now succeeding, now stumbling and failing, but without compromise and without ever abandoning his aim in order to earn a living in some other way, as did all the others who tried like him at this time to practice painting as an imaginative art.

He drew with a fine breadth and monumental simplicity whether on a large scale or small. Richard Muther, the German art historian (whose history of the nineteenth-century painting has the critical standards of its time but represents an immense acquaintance with the art of the century), was thus able to pick him out even from reproductions as a "strong and forcible artist" who knew his business. "The drawing is noble and large," Muther went on to say; "the idea simple and deep."<sup>2</sup> And, as Jarvis observed, if his people are supposed to be doing something, they do it. They do not merely sit there stupidly to have their pictures painted. If they are supposed to be reading a letter, they read; if they are grouped around a musician, they listen. The expressiveness of the hands and feet of Allston's figures is remarked by both Mrs. Jameson and Thomas Cole. Deriving his conception of form from the tradition of the Renaissance, he used both expressive and architectonic movement to embody the inspirations "of delight, of mystery, and fear" peculiar to his own time.

2. Richard Muther, *The History of Modern Painting* (4 vols.; London and New York, 1907), IV, 288.



Allston was, however, most distinguished as a colorist. By discovering in the baroque and in the Venetian school the principles of expression by color and light, he found his way to a solution of the technical problems of romantic painting as early as 1804-5 and thus was one of the earliest artists of the nineteenth century to reassert the coloristic tradition as a language for their own time. He created his own language of color that is also light, which is not the same as that of either Constable or Turner, Delacroix or Corot, but an independent development.

Allston introduced into American painting a brooding, meditative quality that has remained one of its characteristic tones to the present day. His mind was quiet and deep, full of strong contrasts of light and shadow, as is indicated by the lines already quoted from his sonnet "On a Word, Man":

For who shall hope the mystery to scan  
Of that dark being symbolized in *Man*?

It is characteristic of Allston that, when G. C. Verplanck wrote him in 1830 about the possibility of a decoration in the rotunda of the Capitol in Washington, upon some scene from the War of Independence, he showed no interest in a battle subject. Take away from a battle scene the furious noises that make it exciting but which painting cannot suggest, he said, and you have little left to interest a painter. He preferred a civil subject for that reason, and then he suggested hesitantly:

"There is another class of subject, however, in which, were I permitted to choose from it, I should find exciting matter enough, and more than enough, for my imperfect skill, that is, from Scripture. But I fear this is a forlorn hope. Yet why should it be? This is a Christian land, and the Scriptures belong to no country, but to man. The facts they record come home to all men, to the high and the low, the wise and the simple; but I need not enlarge on this subject to you. Should the government allow me to select a subject from them, I need not say with what delight I should accept the commission." And, he went on to say, supposing such a subject to be possible, "there's a subject already composed *in petto* which I have long intended to paint, as soon as I am at liberty—the three Marys at the tomb of the Saviour, the angel sitting on a stone

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before the mouth of the sepulchre. I consider this one of my happiest conceptions. The terrible beauty of the angel, his preternatural brightness, the varied emotions of wonder, awe and bewilderment of the three women, the streak of distant daybreak, lighting the city of Jerusalem out of the darkness, and the deep-toned spell of the *chiaro-scuro*, mingling as it were the night with the day, I see now before me."<sup>3</sup> As Verplanck observed, this was not the right subject for that place. But it reveals the elements with which Allston's imagination worked—silence, light, wonder, mystery, loveliness.

A sense of mystery surrounding our lives, of powers and realities beyond our understanding which we yet are aware of and which create the poetry of existence, was a constant element of Allston's art. His early work displayed it in its imposing and grandiose dramatic moods ("Rising of a Thunderstorm at Sea," "The Deluge," "The Dead Man Revived," "Uriel," "Belshazzar's Feast"), in its grand idyls ("Diana in the Chase," "Elijah in the Desert," "Rebecca at the Well," "A Mother Watching Her Sleeping Child"), and in its highly individual, brooding portraits. His later work was distinguished by its more intimate scale, its mood of reverie, and its dreamlike fantasy, accompanied by a progressive quieting of the movement and a dematerialization of the color into air and light.

Although as a stylist Allston was the most accomplished and interesting American painter of his time, he had relatively little influence upon the next generation of painting. Of his early pupils, Leslie remained in London and Morse abandoned painting for the telegraph. He made no effort after his return to Boston to attract pupils or to form a school, although he was always glad to talk to younger artists. In the 1820's and 1830's he gave encouragement and advice to several future sculptors, Horatio and Richard Greenough, John F. Cogdell, and W. W. Story, and to the future architect, Henry Greenough. But, as his life grew more retired, he sent prospective pupils like De Veaux, unless they had some personal claim upon him, to others. In the 1830's he taught his nephews,

3. Charles Warren, "Why the Battle of New Orleans Was Never Painted," in *Odd Byways in American History* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1942).

George W. Flagg, the genre painter, and Jared B. Flagg, who afterward wrote his biography, and Sarah Clarke, the sister of James Freeman Clarke. Among the Boston painters, Francis Alexander, who owned Allston's painting of "The Sisters," seems to have learned most from his example. But both Alexander and Miss Clarke spent the latter part of their lives in Italy, where Alexander, at least, gave up painting for the pleasures of collecting.

With the 1820's painters began to congregate in New York, where the National Academy of Design furnished a rallying point. The young romantic realists of the Hudson River knew of Allston only through Morse. A few of them heard in this way Allston's advice to look to the Venetians. One of these was William Page, who worked in Boston for a few years (1845-48) and tried to learn the secret of Allston's color. Although he was all too often unsuccessful, he carried on Allston's technique of superimposed colors and his warm palette into the second half of the century. But the shift in the scene of American painting left Allston's studio in Cambridgeport far removed from the center of activity. He worked quietly in his studio, absorbed in his own thoughts and his own work, but separated from the next generation by the place where he lived, by temperament, and by the changes that had taken place in the world. He exerted an influence largely by the fact that he had, as an American artist, achieved a standing in the international culture of his day and that, as an older man who had won his rank, he set an example of dignity, modesty, and generous-mindedness. The best contemporary estimate of his achievement as a painter is that left by Mrs. Jameson. Hers is the judgment of a critic of sensibility and wide culture and of a woman accustomed to the acquaintance of able and distinguished people. After Allston's death she wrote:

"About two years before his death there was an exhibition of his works at Boston—an exhibition which, in the amount of excellence, might well be compared to the room full of Sir Joshuas at the Institution last year. Those who have not seen many of Allston's pictures, will hardly believe this; those who have, will admit the justice of the comparison—

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will remember those of his creations, in which he combined the richest tones of color with the utmost delicacy and depth of expression, and added to these merits a softness and finish of execution and correctness of drawing, particularly in the extremities, which Sir Joshua never attained—nor, perhaps, attempted. When I have thought of the vehement poetical sensibility with which Allston was endowed—his early turn for the wild, the marvelous, the terrible—his nervous temperament, and the sort of dreamy indolence which now and then seemed to come over him, I have more and more deeply appreciated the sober grandeur of his composition, the refined grace of some of his most poetical creations, the harmonious sweetness which tempered his most gorgeous combinations of color, and the conscientious, patient care with which every little detail is executed. . . . When I saw him, in 1838, I was struck by the dignity of his figure and by the simple grace of his manners: his dress was rather careless, and he wore his own fine silver hair long and flowing; his forehead and eyes were remarkably good, the general expression of his countenance open, serious, and sweet, the tone of his voice earnest, soft, penetrating. Notwithstanding the nervous irritability of his constitution, which the dangerous and prolonged illness of 1811 had enhanced, he was particularly gentle and self-possessed. . . .

“When I heard of the death of Allston, it was not with regret or pain, but rather with a start, a shudder, as when a light—which, though distant, is yet present—is suddenly withdrawn.”<sup>4</sup>

Allston's influence was much greater upon American life outside his own profession. There are few figures in the flowering of New England who were not touched by him in some way. He made his impression both by the quality of his achievement and by the quality of his life. There had been portrait painters in Boston for a century and exhibitions at the Athenaeum since 1827; but Allston's retrospective exhibition of 1839 made an effect different from anything that had preceded it. This was not a matter of family portraits, or a miscellaneous collection of pictures that one could look at or not, as one pleased. It was lifework of an

4. Anna Jameson, “Washington Allston,” *Athenaeum*, 1844, pp. 15 ff.

imaginative artist living in their midst and speaking powerfully in the language of painting. The exhibit was a challenge which gave most of the young writers of Boston and Concord their first serious awareness of the art of painting. Out of their discussions in the Transcendental Club grew Emerson's essay on art. Margaret Fuller wrote a long essay on Allston for the first number of the *Dial*. James Freeman Clarke published poems on some of the paintings in the same magazine. Oliver Wendell Holmes, who had formed some ideas about painting while a medical student in Paris, took his courage in his hands and wrote a long article on the exhibition for the *North American Review*. Elizabeth Palmer Peabody published a pamphlet on the exhibit. And very sensible art criticism theirs was, too, on the whole: a modern painter would be fortunate to get half so careful and thoughtful a reception.

But Allston's function was also to stimulate the imagination and to enlarge the conception of life of those aspiring young minds who, like Margaret Fuller, were searching for "the *mot d'énigme*," as she said in her essay on Allston, "for which we are all looking. How the poetical mind can live and work in peace and good faith! how it may unfold to its due perfection in an unpoetical society." There are references to Allston and reflections upon him scattered through ten years of Emerson's *Journals*. Sometimes he raged at him because his art did not stun and overwhelm, as Emerson thought it should; but there are other reflections also:

"Mr. Allston would build a very plain house and have plain furniture, because he would hold out no bribe to any to visit him who had not similar tastes to his own—a good ascetic. . . . Brant's head in Stone's *Life of Brant* reminded me instantly of a mountain head, and the furrows of the brow suggest the strata of the summit. Gladly I perceive this fine resemblance, for we like to reconcile man and the world in all ways. Then I went to Boston and saw Allston's 'Sisters' at Alexander's rooms. There again were human forms more related to the lights of morning and evening than to human society as we know it. . . . My college should have Allston, Greenough, Bryant, Irving, Webster, Alcott, summoned

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for its domestic professors. And if I must send abroad (and, if we send for dancers and singers and actors, why not at the same price for scholars?), Carlyle, Hallam, Campbell, should come and read lectures on History, Poetry, Letters. . . . Then I would open my lecture rooms to the wide nation; and they should pay, each man, a fee that should give my professors a remuneration fit and noble. Then I should see the lecture room, the college, filled with life and hope. . . . I should see living learning; the Muse once more in the eye and cheek of youth." The last reference in Emerson's *Journal* is dated May 8, 1844: "In Boston, I trod the street a little proudly, that I could walk from Allston's Belshazzar's Feast to the Sculpture Gallery, and sit before Michelangelo's Day and Night, and the Antiques; then into the Library; then to Ole Bull."

Bronson Alcott made a pilgrimage to Cambridgeport to ask Allston to tell him of his idol Coleridge. Nathaniel Hawthorne speculated broodingly about him in his notebook and wrote of him in the *Mosses from an Old Manse*; Sophia Peabody, Hawthorne's wife, copied Allston's "Lorenzo and Jessica." George Bancroft owned a picture by him. The elder Richard Henry Dana was his closest friend; the younger's recollections of him form a chapter of his autobiography. Lowell speaks of him in his reminiscences. Hillard and Longfellow were his friends and wrote reviews of his books. His pictures were a distinctive part of the Boston that Howells knew. His image rose in the mind of Julia Ward Howe, when, at the age of ninety, she recalled her memories of Boston as it had been when she first saw it, more than fifty years before.

"Some years after my marriage [here her memory deceived her, for it must have been in the winter of 1842-43 during which she became engaged to Mr. Howe] I encountered Mr. Allston in Chestnut Street, Boston, on a bitter winter day. He had probably been visiting his friend Mr. Dana, who resided in that street. The ground was covered with snow, and Mr. Allston, with his snowy curls and old-fashioned attire, looked like an impersonation of winter, his luminous dark eyes suggesting the fire which warms the heart of the cold season. The wonderful beauty of the face, intensified by age, impressed me deeply. He did not

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recognize me, having seen me but once, and we passed without any salutation; but his living image in my mind takes precedence of all the shadowy shapes which his magic placed upon canvas."<sup>5</sup>

Thus Allston's life and his work entered into the consciousness of those whom an artist would most wish to have for audience in the New England of his own time and formed part of their awareness of life and of their memories.

5. Julia Ward Howe, *Reminiscences, 1819-1899* (Boston and New York, 1899), p. 43.

# Catalogue

## of the Existing and Recorded Paintings of Washington Allston

EDGAR PRESTON RICHARDSON

and

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW DANA

[References are given only (1) to the early exhibitions of Allston's work during his lifetime and thereafter down to the memorial exhibition at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, in 1881; (2) to the previous monographs on Allston, including Richard Henry Dana's notes for a biography which was never written; and (3) to a small number of other references which must be considered primary. The references in this catalogue are not a complete bibliography of each work.]

### I. JUVENILIA

The titles of a number of Allston's earliest work, done in school or in college, have been preserved, although the works themselves seem to have disappeared, probably most rightly, shortly after they were executed. The titles are, however, of some interest as showing the tastes and interests of a boy growing up in post-Revolutionary American society, remote from the world of art but groping toward it.

a) *From school days at Newport*: "The Storming of Count Roderick's Castle" (pen and ink); "The Seige of Toulon" (water color); "Three drawings of log huts and blockhouses" (probably copied from a book on rural architecture), owned by Edmund Trowbridge Dana, Palo Alto, California; "Portrait of a House Servant, a St. Domingo Negro"; "Caricature of His French Class."

b) *At Harvard College*: "Mount Vesuvius" (copy of an old picture; Allston's first landscape in oil); "Copy of Smibert's Cardinal Bentivoglio"; masks of Don Quixote and Sancho Panza for a college play; "Scene from Schiller's *Robbers*"; "Scene from the Tragedy of *Barbarossa*"; "Scene from Mrs. Radcliffe's *Mysteries of Udolpho*"; "Octavia" from George Coleman's *The Mountaineers*; "Damon and Musidora" from Thomson's *Seasons*; ("... that weird picture of a maniac crushing a dove, which Sully so much admired..." [Sweetser, p. 22], which, as Mr. H. W. L. Dana points out, must be based upon Southey's *Joan of Arc* [1796]: "Cruelty came next grasping with savage smile a widowed dove"). Mr. H. W. L. Dana owns a considerable number of pen-and-ink



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caricatures done while in college. Another, in a record book of the Hasty Pudding Club, is in the Harvard College Library.

1. **THE BUCK'S PROGRESS, No. I: THE INTRODUCTION OF A COUNTRY LAD TO A CLICK OF TOWN BUCKS, 1796 [Pl. II]**

Pen and water color on paper: h. 9½; w. 11½ inches (within the ruled margin).

Signed at l.r.: "Washington Allston, Nov. 10th, 1796."

Ref.: Flagg, p. 14.

Owned by Mrs. Frank M. Clark, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

2. **THE BUCK'S PROGRESS, No. II: A BEAU IN HIS DRESSING ROOM, 1796**

Pen and water color on paper: h. 9½; w. 11½ inches (within margin). Signed:

"Washington Allston, Nov. 10th, 1796."

Ref.: Flagg, p. 14.

Owned by Mrs. Frank M. Clark, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

3. **THE BUCK'S PROGRESS, No. III: A MIDNIGHT FRAY WITH THE WATCHMEN, 1796**

Pen and water color on paper: h. 9½; w. 11½ inches (within margin). Signed:

"Washington Allston, Nov. 10th, 1796."

Ref.: Flagg, p. 14.

Owned by Mrs. Frank M. Clark, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

4. **JOHN HARRIS, 1796-97**

Miniature: h. 2½; w. 2½ inches.

John Harris was graduated from Harvard in 1799, in the class before Allston, and died in 1826. Jarvis tells the story that he later showed this miniature to Allston, who had no recollection of it and, on being pressed for an opinion by Jarvis, said that it showed no artistic promise.

Ref.: Dunlap, *History*, II, 300; Jarvis; Dana, No. 16; Sweetser, pp. 21, 187; Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, 1881, No. 241; Flagg, p. 84; *Washington Allston, 1779-1843*, The Detroit Institute of Arts and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 1947, No. 1a.

Owned by the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. (Gift of Miss Harris.)

5. **MRS. TIMOTHY WATERHOUSE, 1796-97**

Pastel: h. 20; w. 16 inches.

Executed presumably during the years 1796-97 when Allston boarded with the Waterhouse family.

Ref.: Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, 1881, No. 263 (The Misses Ware); M. King, *Harvard and Its Surroundings* (1886).

Owned by Mrs. Mary Ware Sampson, Cambridge, Massachusetts, great-granddaughter of Dr. Waterhouse.

6. **YOUNG MR. WATERHOUSE [ANDREW OLIVER WATERHOUSE], 1796-98**

Dr. Waterhouse, professor of medicine at Harvard, "claims that the youth's first essay in oil painting was a portrait of his eldest boy, which was in the

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doctor's possession as late as 1833" (Sweetser). Andrew Oliver Waterhouse was born on November 12, 1789, and was therefore about seven years old.

*Ref.*: Dunlap, II, 300; Dana, No. 4; Sweetser, pp. 23, 189.

### 7. SELF PORTRAIT, 1796-1800

Canvas: h. 33½; w. 26 inches.

Unfinished. An old label on the back says, "Painted when in college," which agrees with the technique and the age of the sitter.

*Ref.*: Sweetser, p. 188; Flagg, p. 160.

Owned by the Dana Collection, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

### 8. LANDSCAPE, 1796-1800.

Wash drawing on paper (cropped): h. 6½; w. 6½ inches. Inscribed below: "Washington Allston, Painted while in college, Presented H. C. Flagg by Wm. Al. . ."

Owned by the Carolina Art Association, Gibbes Memorial Art Gallery, Charleston, South Carolina.

### 9. EDMUND TROWBRIDGE DANA, *ca.* 1797

Pastel: h. 14½; w. 10½ inches.

Edmund Trowbridge Dana (1779-1859) was a college mate and, like his brother Richard Henry Dana, a lifelong friend and eventually brother-in-law of the artist.

Owned by Mr. H. W. L. Dana, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

### 10. LANDSCAPE WITH RUSTIC FESTIVAL, 1798

Canvas: h. 11½; w. 13½ inches. Inscribed on the back: "W. Allston, designed and painted Nov. 1798, Harvard College, Cambridge, Mass."

This picture, which descended through the Flagg branch of the family, was presumably the one listed by Sweetser as belonging to the Misses Allston, Charleston, South Carolina. A pen sketch related to this composition is in the Dana Collection. See the history of No. 55.

*Ref.*: Sweetser, p. 189.

Owned by the Countess Laslo Szechenyi, New York City.

### 11. LANDSCAPE, 1798

Canvas: h. 11½; w. 13½ inches. Inscribed on back: "W. Allston, designed and painted December, 1798."

The reverse bears a painted "Caricature portrait of Joseph Willard," president of Harvard College.

*Ref.*: Boston, Harding's Studio, 1839, No. 43 (owned by General Sumner); Sweetser, p. 187; Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, 1881, No. 204.

Owned by the Boston Athenaeum, Boston. (Gift of William H. Sumner.)

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12. LANDSCAPE, ca. 1798

Exhibited Boston, Athenaeum, 1845, No. 2. "This little picture and No. 5 are interesting as being among the earliest productions of the late Mr. Allston—painted while in college.—Dr. W. CHANNING, Owner."

13. LANDSCAPE WITH HORSEMAN, ca. 1798

Exhibited at Somerset House, London, 1802.

Ref.: Dunlap, II, 300, 306; Dana, Nos. 3, 12; Sweetser, pp. 35, 189; Flagg, pp. 13, 40.

14. LANDSCAPE, 1799

Exhibited Boston, Harding's Studio, 1839, No. 44. "In possession of the artist. Painted when at college, Cambridge. N.B. These youthful efforts are exhibited as objects of curiosities [*sic*]." This was probably the same as the "Landscape," No. 32, in the inventory of Allston's estate, 1843, and as the "Landscape" (painted while the artist was a student in college) lent by Mrs. Allston to the Athenaeum, 1850, No. 66.

15. LANDSCAPE, ca. 1799

Inventory of Allston's estate, 1843, No. 33. Probably the same as the second "Landscape" (painted while the artist was a student in college) lent by Miss Allston to the Athenaeum, 1850, No. 67.

16. THE TIPPLER, 1799

Inscribed on the back: "Designed and painted by Washington Allston, June, 1799."

Owned by Mr. H. W. L. Dana, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

17. LANDSCAPE, ca. 1799–1800

Canvas: h. 15½; w. 26 inches.

Stylistically related to Nos. 31 and 32 below. H. W. L. Dana had suggested that it may represent Aeneas and Anchises on the shore of Africa, near Carthage, after their shipwreck (*Aeneid* i. 159–68).

Owned by the Wayside Museums, Harvard, Massachusetts.

18. MAN IN CHAINS, 1800 [Pl. III]

Oil on panel: h. 12¾; w. 9½ inches. Inscribed on the back: "Allston designed and painted April 1800."

A drawing connected with this figure is in Allston's copy of Churchill's *Works* which is in the library at Craigie House in the possession of H. W. L. Dana, inscribed: "Washington Allston, Harvard College, 1799."

Ref.: Andover, Addison Gallery of American Art, *Bulletin*, 1941, p. 7; *Washington Allston, 1779–1843*, The Detroit Institute of Arts and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 1947, No. 2.

Owned by the Addison Gallery of American Art, Andover, Massachusetts.

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19. **ROBERT ROGERS, 1800 [Pl. IV]**  
 Canvas: h. ca. 31½; w. 25 inches.  
 Rogers (1758–1835) was Allston's schoolmaster. William Ellery Channing's account of Rogers' school at Newport is to be found in E. P. Peabody, *Reminiscences of Reverend William Ellery Channing, D.D.*, pp. 61, 82.  
*Ref.*: Dana, No. 38; Sweetser, p. 188; Flagg, p. 34.  
 Owned by the Redwood Library and Athenaeum, Newport, Rhode Island.
  
20. **THE SQUINTING FIDDLER, 1800**  
 Painted at Newport.  
*Ref.*: Dana, No. 39, "Amand Auboyneau" ("not meeting him he changed it to a squinting fiddler").
  
21. **FRENCH NATIONAL CONVENTION AS A RASHER OF FROGS, 1800**  
 Painted at Newport.  
*Ref.*: Dana, No. 40.
  
22. **SAMUEL KING, 1800(?)**  
 Sweetser mentions a portrait of Samuel King of Newport (born, Newport, 1749; died there 1819), the portrait and miniature painter, as one of Allston's first oil paintings; it is listed by Sweetser as a lost work.  
*Ref.*: Sweetser, pp. 18, 188.
  
23. **HEAD OF JUDAS ISCARIOT, 1800–1801**  
*Ref.*: Dunlap, II, 302 (painted at Charleston); Dana, No. 8 (painted at Newport); Sweetser, pp. 26, 189; W. G. Simms, *Southern Quarterly Review*, October, 1843.
  
24. **HEAD OF ST. PETER WHEN HE HEARD THE COCK CROW, 1800–1801**  
 Mr. Edward Rutledge Moore, of Sewanee, Tennessee, owns a painting which descendants of the Allston family in South Carolina believed to be this picture. It seems to be more probably an Italian or Spanish picture in the tradition of Ribera.  
*Ref.*: Dunlap, II, 302 (painted at Charleston); Dana, No. 7 (painted at Newport); Sweetser, pp. 26, 189.
  
25. **ROBBERS FIGHTING WITH EACH OTHER FOR THE SPOILS OVER A MURDERED TRAVELER, 1801**  
 Painted at Charleston.  
*Ref.*: Dunlap, II, 156; Dana, No. 6.
  
26. **SATAN AT THE GATES OF HELL GUARDED BY SIN AND DEATH, 1801**  
 Painted at Charleston. Dana quotes the artist's brother William as saying that this was first sketched on the bare floor of a room and afterward made into "a finished sketch on paper."  
*Ref.*: Dana, No. 41; Flagg, p. 32.

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### II. LONDON, 1801-3

27. **CHRIST LOOKED AT PETER, 1801**  
Painted at London; mentioned in Allston's letter to Charles Fraser, August 25, 1801; "Contains twenty figures, about two feet in height."  
*Ref.*: Dana, No. 60; Flagg, p. 46.
28. **A ROCKY COAST WITH BANDITTI, 1801-2**  
Painted at London; exhibited at Somerset House, 1802.  
*Ref.*: Dunlap, II, 306; Dana, No. 11; Sweetser, pp. 35, 189; Flagg, p. 40.
29. **A FRENCH SOLDIER TELLING A STORY, 1801-2**  
Painted at London; exhibited at Somerset House, 1802.  
*Ref.*: Dunlap, II, 306; Dana, No. 10; Sweetser, pp. 35, 189; Flagg, pp. 40, 41.
30. **THE POET'S ORDINARY, 1802-3.**  
Painted at London, as a companion to the preceding. "A companion to it, also comic, 'The Poet's Ordinary,' when the lean fare was enriched by an accidental arrest" (Allston to Dunlap).
31. **A STUDY FROM LIFE, 1802-3**  
Canvas: h. 38; w. 27½ inches.  
Richard H. Dana, Jr., in his *Journal*, July 12, 1843, describing the pictures found in Allston's studio after his death, mentions this and says that it was painted in London, from life. The immature technique places it in Allston's first London period.  
*Ref.*: Boston, Athenaeum, 1850, No. 64 (Mrs. Allston); Sweetser, p. 188; Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, 1881, No. 268 (Richard H. Dana, Jr.); Metropolitan Museum of Art, *Bulletin*, III (1944-45), 57-58.  
Owned by the Dana Collection, Cambridge, Massachusetts. (On loan at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City.)
32. **LANDSCAPE, 1801-3 [Pl. V]**  
Canvas: h. 28; w. 37½ inches.  
The immature technique and the strong influence of Salvator Rosa place this in Allston's first London period.  
*Ref.*: Boston, Athenaeum, 1853 (W. Whiting).  
Owned by the Concord Free Public Library, Concord, Massachusetts.

### III. PARIS, 1803-4

33. **RISE OF A THUNDERSTORM AT SEA, 1804 [Pl. VI]**  
Canvas: h. 38½; w. 51 inches.  
*Ref.*: Bristol, Allston Exhibition, 1814, No. 4; Boston, Athenaeum, 1827, No. 29 (J. Mason); Boston, Athenaeum, 1832, No. 71 (Mrs. J. Mason); Boston, Harding's Studio, 1839, No. 32 (S. D. Parker) (this catalogue gives the date

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1804); Boston, Athenaeum, 1850, No. 105 (S. D. Parker); Sweetser, p. 187; Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, 1881, No. 233; New York, Whitney Museum of American Art, *A Century of American Landscape Painting*, 1938, No. 7; E. P. Richardson, *The Way of Western Art*, 1939, p. 63; New York, Museum of Modern Art, *Romantic Painting in America*, 1943, No. 2; Chicago, The Art Institute of Chicago, *The Hudson River School*, 1945, No. 7; *Washington Allston, 1779-1843*, The Detroit Institute of Arts and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 1947, No. 4.

Owned by the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

### 34. THE DELUGE, 1804 [Pl. VII]

Canvas: h. 48; w. 65½ inches.

The sky has darkened and seems flatter than it must have appeared originally.

A low shore and a square, barnlike shape (the Ark?) are barely visible on the horizon at the left. Closely related in style to No. 33.

*Ref.*: Metropolitan Museum of Art, *Bulletin*, IV (1909), 89, and *ibid.*, III (new ser., 1944-45), 54; New York, Museum of Modern Art, *Romantic Painting in America*, 1943, No. 1; E. P. Richardson, "What Is Romantic Painting in America?" *Magazine of Art*, January, 1944, p. 3; Detroit Institute of Arts, *The World of the Romantic Artist*, 1944, No. 33; Chicago, The Art Institute of Chicago, *The Hudson River School*, 1945, No. 3; London, England, Tate Gallery, *American Painting*, 1946, No. 2; *Washington Allston, 1779-1843*, The Detroit Institute of Arts and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 1947, No. 3.

Owned by the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City.

### 35. CUPID PLAYING WITH THE HELMET OF MARS, 1804

Canvas: h. 38½; w. 31 inches.

Copy of a detail from Rubens' "Henry IV Receiving the Portrait of Marie de' Medici."

*Ref.*: Dunlap, II, 312; Dana, No. 15; Sweetser, p. 36; Flagg, p. 188.

Owned by the Dana Collection, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

## IV. ROME, 1804-8

### 36. LANDSCAPE WITH A LAKE, 1804 [Pl. VIII]

Canvas: h. 38; w. 51 inches. Signed on the back: "W. Allston pinxt 1804."

*Ref.*: Boston, Athenaeum, 1828, No. 185 (J. Mason); Boston, Athenaeum, 1832, No. 95 (Mrs. J. Mason) ("painted in Paris, 1804"); Boston, Harding's Studio, 1839, No. 25; Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, 1881, No. 214 (William Powell Mason); Chicago, The Art Institute of Chicago, *The Hudson River School*, 1945, No. 6; *Washington Allston, 1779-1843*, The Detroit Institute of Arts and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 1947, No. 6.

Owned by Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, The M. and M. Karolik Collection.

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37. DIANA IN THE CHASE, or SWISS SCENERY, 1805 [Pl. IX]

Canvas: h. 66½ ; w. 97½ inches. Signed at l.r.: "W. Allston pinx. Roma." The foreground had been damaged and repainted.

Ref.: Bristol, 1814, No. 8; London, British Institution, 1816, No. 234; Boston, Athenaeum, 1832, No. 85 (Loammi Baldwin); Coleridge, "Essays on the Fine Arts," in Cottle, p. 227; Boston, Harding's Studio, 1839, No. 7 (Isaac P. Davis); Boston, Athenaeum, 1843, No. 37 (I. P. Davis); Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, 1881, No. 228 (Mrs. S. Hooper); Sweetser, pp. 115, 188; Flagg, pp. 121, 123, 145, 360; Pittsburgh, Carnegie Institute, *A Century of American Landscape Painting*, 1939, No. 67; New York, Museum of Modern Art, *Romantic Painting in America*, 1943, No. 3; Detroit Institute of Arts, *The World of the Romantic Artist*, 1944, No. 61; *Washington Allston, 1779-1843*, The Detroit Institute of Arts and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 1947, No. 7.

Owned by Mrs. Algernon Coolidge, Boston.

38. ITALIAN LANDSCAPE, ca. 1805 [Pl. X]

Canvas: h. 39; w. 51 inches. Signed at l.l.: "W. Allston."

Ref.: Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, 1881, No. 211 (Henry Parkman); Andover, Addison Gallery of American Art, *Bulletin*, 1943, p. 7; Chicago, The Art Institute of Chicago, *The Hudson River School*, 1945, No. 1; *Washington Allston, 1779-1843*, The Detroit Institute of Arts and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 1947, No. 8.

Owned by the Addison Gallery of American Art, Andover, Massachusetts.

39. SELF PORTRAIT, 1805 [Pl. XI]

Canvas: h. 31½; w. 26½ inches. Signed: "W. Allston, Romae, 1805."

Given by Allston to his friend, Mrs. Nathaniel Amory; on her death inherited by her sister, Mrs. Wormley; John T. Johnston sale, Chickering Hall, New York, December 19-22, 1876, No. 140.

Ref.: Boston, Harding's Studio, 1839, No. 23 (Nathaniel Amory); Sweetser, pp. 51, 187; Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, 1881, No. 229 (Mrs. Samuel Hooper); *Washington Allston, 1779-1843*, The Detroit Institute of Arts and The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 1947, No. 1.

Owned by the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

40. SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE, 1806 [Pl. XII]

Canvas: h. 30; w. 25 inches.

Painted at Rome and left unfinished because of Coleridge's departure for England.

Ref.: S. T. Coleridge, *Letters*, II, 572 (letter of December 7, 1811, to Sir George Beaumont; Allston must have started this as a full-length, for Coleridge speaks of it as such here); London, Royal Academy, 1812; Sweetser, pp. 120,

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188; Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, 1881, No. 271 (Heirs of W. Allston); Flagg, pp. 104, 105; New York, Museum of Modern Art, *Romantic Painting in America*, 1943, No. 4; E. P. Richardson, "What Is Romantic Painting in America?" *Magazine of Art*, January, 1944, p. 2; *Washington Allston, 1779-1843*, The Detroit Institute of Arts and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 1947, No. 10.

Owned by the Dana Collection, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

41. JASON RETURNING TO DEMAND HIS FATHER'S KINGDOM, 1807-8 [Pl. XIV]

Canvas: h. 168; w. 240 inches.

Painted at Rome; unfinished at the artist's departure in 1808. The painting was left boxed at Leghorn, and Allston did not recover it until 1816 or 1817, when his interest in classical subjects had disappeared.

Ref.: S. T. Coleridge, *Letters*, II, 572 (letter of December 7, 1811, to Sir George Beaumont); Allston, "Color Book," sheet 26; Sweetser, p. 188; Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, 1881, No. 251.

Owned by the Dana Collection, Cambridge, Massachusetts

42. JASON RETURNING TO DEMAND HIS FATHER'S KINGDOM: SKETCH, 1807-8 [Pl. XIII]

Paper on canvas: h. 34½; w. 44 inches.

Painted at Rome.

Ref.: Boston, Athenaeum, 1847, No. 144 (described in the first impression as "The Departure of Regulus To Return to Cathage"); Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, 1881, No. 274. (See also under the preceding, No. 41).

Owned by the Dana Collection, Cambridge, Massachusetts

43. DAVID PLAYING BEFORE SAUL, 1805-8 [Pl. XV]

Canvas: h. 14½; w. 17¼ inches.

Painted at Rome. This and the following were together in the collection of Professor Charles Eliot Norton and that of his son, Richard; Ehrich Galleries; Thomas B. Clarke sale, January 7, 1919, Nos. 25, 26; Penfield *et al*, May 17-18, 1934, No. 93; Cornelius Michaelson sale, April 16, 1936, No. 20.

Ref.: Sweetser, pp. 52, 188; Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, 1881, No. 261 (Charles Eliot Norton).

Owned by the Carolina Art Association, Gibbes Memorial Art Gallery, Charleston, South Carolina.

44. MOSES AND THE SERPENT, or THE ROMANS AND THE SERPENT OF EPIDAUROS, 1805-8

Canvas: h. 15; w. 18 inches.

Painted at Rome. History the same as No. 43.

Ref.: Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, 1881, No. 262.

Owned by the Carolina Art Association, Gibbes Memorial Art Gallery, Charleston, South Carolina.



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45. DIDO AND ANNA, 1805-8 [Pl. XVI]

Millboard: h. 24; w. 18½ inches.

Its style and the classical subject put this picture probably in the Roman period.

Allston apparently made use of the *Study from Life* for the figure of Anna; a sheet of pen sketches and a pencil sketch of the head of Dido are in the Dana Collection.

Ref.: Boston, Athenaeum, 1847, No. 142 ("Anna, fatebor enim . . . agnosco veteris vestigia flammae. *Aen.* iv. 20"; "The large picture of which this is a sketch was left partly drawn"); Boston, Athenaeum, 1850, No. 92; Sweetser, p. 187; Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, 1881, No. 245 (study for No. 259); Flagg, p. 270.

Owned by the Dana Collection, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

46. DIDO AND ANNA, 1805-8

Chalk drawing on canvas: h. 91; w. 67½ inches.

Allston had begun to put in the outlines with a brush over the chalk but had not carried it further. Engraved in Cheney, *Outlines and Sketches* (1850).

Ref.: Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, 1881, No. 259.

Owned by the Dana Collection, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

47. CASKET SCENE, 1807

Canvas: h. 19¾; w. 23½ inches.

From *The Merchant of Venice*.

Painted at Florence in 1807, according to the will of John E. Allston, who left it in 1877 to the Boston Athenaeum.

Ref.: Bristol, 1814, No. 5; Sweetser, p. 187; Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, 1881, No. 206.

Owned by the Boston Athenaeum, Boston.

48. CUPID AND PSYCHE, 1805-8

Allston mentions taking this home to America with him from Italy in his letter to Vanderlyn from Leghorn, April 23, 1808. Dana, in his notes on our No. 69, mentions seeing a small painting of this subject, with standing figures, during Allston's stay at Boston, 1808-11. Wordsworth to Beaumont, November 16, 1811: "Allston . . . has brought with him a few pictures . . . among others a Cupid and Psyche, which in C's opinion, has not for colouring been surpassed since Titian" (see Martha H. Shackford, *Wordsworth's Interest in Painters and Pictures* [Wellesley, Mass., 1945], p. 33).

Ref.: Sweetser, pp. 62, 159.

49. FALSTAFF AND HIS RECRUITS AT JUSTICE SHALLOW'S, 1806-8

Allston mentions this "little Falstaff" in a letter to Vanderlyn from Leghorn, April 23, 1808; the exhibition catalogue of 1839 gives the date 1806; that of 1827 gives 1809.

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*Ref.*: Boston, Athenaeum, 1827, No. 140 (W. Sullivan); Boston, Harding's Studio, 1839, No. 41 (William Sullivan); Boston, Athenaeum, 1853, No. 192 (J. E. Lodge); Dana, No. 75; Sweetser, pp. 83, 188; Flagg, pp. 78-79.

50. FALSTAFF PLAYING THE PART OF THE KING, 1806-8

The "Large Falstaff." Leslie in letters of January 28, 1844, and September 6, 1844, to R. H. Dana (transcribed in the Dana notes, No. 75): "In Italy he painted a picture of Falstaff playing the part of the King, the figures the size of life, an unusual mode of treating a comic subject," as being in Allston's cases brought from Leghorn in 1816 or 1817.

### V. BOSTON, 1808-11

51. FRANCIS DANA CHANNING, 1808-9 [Pl. XVIII]

Canvas: h. 30½; w. 27½ inches.

Francis Dana Channing (b. 1775) died of consumption on a sea voyage in 1810; the portrait must have been painted shortly after Allston's return in 1808. Sweetser lists it as belonging to W. F. Channing, of Providence, the subject's son. It was taken by him to England and is now owned there by his granddaughter, the Honorable Julia Channing.

*Ref.*: Sweetser, p. 188.

Owned by Mrs. Arthur Lyman, Waltham, Massachusetts.

52. THE ROBBERS, 1809

Perhaps the same as No. 22.

*Ref.*: Boston, Athenaeum, 1828, No. 183 (Dr. Lowell).

53. CATHERINE AND PETRUCHIO, GRUMIO AND THE TAILOR, 1809

From the *Taming of the Shrew*.

*Ref.*: Boston, Athenaeum, 1827, No. 85 (Mrs. G. Sturgis); Margaret Fuller, *Dial*, I (1840), 81 (she speaks of it in her account of the 1839 exhibition at Harding's Studio, so that it may have been added after the catalogue was printed or she may have seen it exhibited in 1827); Jarvis; Dana, No. 49 (he speaks of both a study and a complete work); Cummings, *Historic Annals of the National Academy of Design*, p. 278 (he says that it was sold in 1859 at the sale of Charles M. Leupp to Edwin Forrest for \$640); Flagg, p. 83.

54. EDMUND T. DANA, 1809

Edmund T. Dana wrote the account of Allston in the *Encyclopaedia Americana*. Cf. No. 9.

*Ref.*: Jarvis; Dana, No. 47; Flagg, p. 83.

55. THE ARTIST'S MOTHER, MRS. HENRY COLLINS FLAGG (MRS. RACHEL MOORE ALLSTON FLAGG), 1809 [Pl. XXII]

Canvas: h. 30½; w. 25½ inches.

Allston visited his mother immediately after his marriage, June 19, 1809. She was then at New Haven with his half-brother, Henry C. Flagg, who was a

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student at Yale. This portrait must have been painted at that time. It descended through the South Carolina branch of the family until it passed in 1884 from Rachel Moore Flagg Gury to her daughter, Mrs. Cornelius Vanderbilt, who was Allston's grandniece, and to her daughter, the present owner.

*Ref.*: Allston to Cogdell, October 21, 1838; Dana, No. 106; Sweetser, p. 189; Flagg, p. 82; *Washington Allston, 1779-1843*, The Detroit Institute of Arts and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 1947, No. 11.

Owned by the Countess Laslo Szechenyi, New York City.

### 56. HENRY C. FLAGG, 1809

Henry C. Flagg, Jr. (1790-1863). A note by Richard Henry Dana III in the Dana Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society, mentions a portrait of Allston's half-brother. If it is not an error, the portrait referred to was perhaps painted at the same time as the portrait of his mother.

### 57. LANDSCAPE OF AMERICAN SCENERY, 1810

Perhaps the same as No. 59.

*Ref.*: Jarvis; Dana, No. 51; Flagg, p. 85.

### 58. SUNRISE, 1810

*Ref.*: Jarvis; Dana, No. 52; Flagg, p. 85.

### 59. LANDSCAPE, 1810

Possibly the same as No. 57.

*Ref.*: Boston, Harding's Studio, 1839, No. 36 (Isaac P. Davis).

### 60. LANDSCAPE, ALPINE SCENERY, 1810

*Ref.*: Boston, Athenaeum, 1837, No. 47 (Edmund Dwight); Boston, Harding's Studio, 1839, No. 13 (same owner but called "Landscape, Italy, 1810"); Boston, Athenaeum, 1846, No. 65, "Landscape, Painted in Italy" (Edmund Dwight); Boston, Athenaeum, 1850, No. 76, "Italian Landscape" (Edmund Dwight).

### 61. COAST SCENE ON THE MEDITERRANEAN, 1811 [Pl. XIX]

Canvas: h. 34; w. 40 inches. Signed at l.l.: "W. Allston."

*Ref.*: Boston, Athenaeum, 1827, No. 16 (T. Williams), and 1831, No. 43; Boston, Harding's Studio, 1839, No. 27 (T. Williams); Jarvis; Dana, No. 48; Boston, Athenaeum, 1850, No. 101 (Mrs. W. Pratt); Boston, Athenaeum, 1857, No. 227 (Mrs. W. Pratt); Sweetser, pp. 115, 187; Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, 1881, No. 212 (Miss Pratt); Flagg, p. 83 (as "Seascape," 1809; the catalogue of 1839, however, gives the date 1811); Chicago, The Art Institute of Chicago, *Hudson River School*, 1945, No. 2; *Washington Allston, 1779-1843*, The Detroit Institute of Arts and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 1947, No. 9.

Owned by Mrs. Arthur Lyman, Waltham, Massachusetts.

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62. **THE POOR AUTHOR AND THE RICH BOOKSELLER, 1811 [Pl. XX]**  
 Canvas: h. 31; w. 27½ inches.  
 A drawing for it is owned by the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.  
*Ref.:* Boston, Harding's Studio, 1839, No. 30 (T. H. Perkins, Jr.); Dana, No. 50; Boston, Athenaeum, 1850, No. 95 (I. Sargent); Sweetser, p. 188; Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, 1881, No. 216 (Ignatius Sargent); Flagg, p. 83; *Washington Allston, 1779-1843*, The Detroit Institute of Arts and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 1947, No. 5.  
 Owned by the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. (Gift of Charles Sprague Sargent, 1927.)
63. **THE VALENTINE, 1809-11 [Pl. XXI]**  
 Canvas: h. 25½; w. 22 inches.  
 Engraved by J. B. Longacre, *The Valentine*.  
*Ref.:* Boston, Athenaeum, 1828, No. 158 (G. Ticknor); Boston, Harding's Studio, 1839, No. 12 (George Ticknor); O. W. Holmes, *North American Review*, L (1840), 378; Boston, Athenaeum, 1850, No. 90 (G. Ticknor), and 1863, No. 174; Sweetser, pp. 109, 187; Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, 1881, No. 209 (Mrs. George Ticknor); Flagg, p. 82.  
 Owned by the estate of Miss Rose L. Dexter, Boston.
64. **ANN CHANNING ALLSTON, 1809-11**  
 Millboard: h. 17½; w. 15½ inches.  
 Ann Channing (1778-1815), Allston's first wife, was the daughter of William Channing, a prominent lawyer of Newport, and granddaughter of William Ellery, a signer of the Declaration of Independence.  
*Ref.:* Boston, Athenaeum, 1847, No. 141 (Mrs. Allston); Boston, Athenaeum, 1857, No. 30 (Mrs. Allston); Sweetser, p. 188; Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, 1881, No. 234 (Mrs. Eustis).  
 Owned by Mrs. John Amory Jeffries, Santa Barbara, California.
65. **WILLIAM ELLERY CHANNING, 1809-11 [Pl. XXIII]**  
 Canvas: h. 31½; w. 27½ inches.  
 William Ellery Channing (1780-1842), Unitarian clergyman, mystic, preacher, author, exerted a profound influence upon American thought in the field of religion and literature. Another version, 30 by 25 inches, formerly in the possession of the Reverend Henry Bellows, is now in the collection of Mr. Henry M. Channing, Sherbourne, Massachusetts. It seems from the photograph to be an old replica of good quality.  
*Ref.:* Dana, No. 116; Sweetser, p. 188; Flagg, pp. 82, 327; *Washington Allston, 1779-1843*, The Detroit Institute of Arts and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 1947, No. 12.  
 Owned by the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. (Gift of his son, William Francis Channing.)

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66. MRS. WILLIAM CHANNING, 1811 [Pl. XXIV]

Canvas: h. 27 $\frac{1}{4}$ ; w. 22 $\frac{3}{4}$  inches.

Lucy Ellery Channing (1752-1834) was the mother of Ann Channing, the artist's first wife, and of William Ellery Channing.

Ref.: Boston, Harding's Studio, 1839, No. 42 (Rev. Dr. Channing); Dana, No. 115; Sweetser, p. 189 (Mrs. Headley, Fishkill-on-Hudson).

Owned by Mrs. John Amory Jeffries, Santa Barbara, California.

VI. LONDON, 1811-18

67. THE DEAD MAN REVIVED BY TOUCHING THE BONES OF THE PROPHET ELISHA, 1811-13 [Pl. XXV]

Canvas: h. 156; w. 132 inches.

The episode is from II Kings 2:20-21.

Thomas Sully and James McMurtrie exerted themselves to raise \$3,500 to purchase this picture for the Pennsylvania Academy in 1816.

Ref.: S. T. Coleridge to Sir George Beaumont, December 7, 1811 (*Letters*, II, 573); Bristol, 1814, No. 1; London, British Institution, 1814, No. 186; Dunlap, II, 315, 318-19; Boston, Harding's Studio, 1839, No. 1; S. T. Coleridge, "Essays on the Fine Arts," in Cottle, pp. 207, 223; Dana, No. 16, and p. 30; Sweetser, pp. 61, 69, 189; Flagg, pp. 41, 100, 105, 119, 122; S. F. B. Morse, *Letters and Journals*, pp. 122, 124, 148, 178.

Owned by the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, Philadelphia.

68. THE DEAD MAN REVIVED: STUDY, 1811

Ref.: Dana, No. 30; Flagg, p. 100.

69. CUPID AND PSYCHE, 1812

R. H. Leslie in a letter of January 28, 1844, to R. H. Dana mentions a large picture of "Cupid and Psyche" which cannot be No. 48: "The next picture A. painted with figures of the size of life was one of Cupid and Psyche. They were sitting in a beautiful landscape with a brook running at their feet. It was a most beautiful composition, full of grace and colored like a Titian."

Ref.: Dana, No. 74.

70. THE ANGEL RELEASING ST. PETER FROM PRISON, 1812 [Pl. XXVIII]

Canvas: h. 124 $\frac{1}{2}$ ; w. 108 $\frac{1}{2}$  inches.

Commissioned by Sir George Beaumont in 1812 and given by him to the parish church of Cole Orton, near Ashby-de-la-Zouche, Leicestershire; returned to Sir George's family in 1853; purchased by Robert William Hooper in 1859 and given to the chapel of the Worcester Insane Hospital; Boston, Athenaeum, 1862, No. 50, and 1864, No. 131; given to the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, 1921.

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*Ref.*: London, British Institution, 1816, No. 206; Dunlap, II, 331; Dana, Nos. 21, 78, 88; Sweetser, pp. 61, 62; Flagg, p. 91; *Washington Allston, 1779-1843*, The Detroit Institute of Arts and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 1947, No. 22.

Owned by the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

**71. THE ANGEL RELEASING ST. PETER FROM PRISON: SKETCH, 1812 [Pl. XXVII]**

Canvas: h. 29; w. 25½ inches.

*Ref.*: Dana, Nos. 21, 88 (this was the painting owned by Francis B. Winthrop of New Haven); New York, National Academy of Design, 1843, No. 154; Flagg, p. 94; *Washington Allston, 1779-1843*, The Detroit Institute of Arts and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 1947, No. 21.

Owned by the Countess Laslo Szechenyi, New York City.

**72. HEAD OF ST. PETER, 1812 [Pl. XXVI]**

Study for the preceding.

*Ref.*: Boston, Athenaeum, 1831, No. 224 (I. P. Davis); Boston, Harding's Studio, 1839, No. 26 (George Bancroft); Dana, No. 86; Sweetser, pp. 62, 189.

Owned by Mrs. William J. A. Bliss, Baltimore, Maryland.

**73. DIANA, ca. 1812**

*Ref.*: London, British Institution, 1814, No. 71; Bristol, 1814, No. 7; James McMurtrie to Allston, April 5, 1816, speaks of the "small Diana"; Dana, No. 93; Sweetser, pp. 70, 72, 189 (Sweetser quotes Benjamin West's enthusiastic praise of this little picture).

**74. CHRIST HEALING THE SICK, 1813 [Pl. XXIX]**

Sepia and white on millboard: h. 27½; w. 39½ inches.

First study for this composition.

*Ref.*: Allston to James McMurtrie, June 13, 1816; Dunlap, II, 320; Dana, No. 20; Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, 1881, No. 242; Flagg, p. 119; *Washington Allston, 1779-1843*, The Detroit Institute of Arts and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 1947, No. 16.

Owned by the Dana Collection, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

**75. CHRIST HEALING THE SICK, 1813**

Oil on millboard: h. 28½; w. 40½ inches.

Second study in color. Allston was dissatisfied with his treatment of the principal incident and abandoned the subject.

*Ref.*: Allston to James McMurtrie, June 13, 1816; Dunlap, II, 320; Dana, Nos. 20, 95; Boston, Athenaeum, 1847, No. 137; Boston, Athenaeum, 1850, No. 71 (R. H. Dana); Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, 1881, No. 265; Flagg, p. 119.

Owned by the Worcester Art Museum, Worcester, Massachusetts.

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## 76. THE PAINT KING, *ca.* 1813

Allston's burlesque poem of this title appeared in the 1813 volume of his poems, *The Sylphs of the Seasons*. The scene of the Fair Ellen carried off by the Paint King is the subject of an engraving, apparently designed to illustrate the volume but never used. The plate is among the Dana Papers in the Massachusetts Historical Society.

## 77. A SCENE IN AN EATING HOUSE, *before* 1814

Canvas: h. 27½; w. 35½ inches.

"The different and characteristic expressions produced by the same accident on men of different countries, exemplified in the affected condolence, conscious indifference, and good-natured mirth, of a Frenchman, a Dutchman, and an Englishman; the Sufferer an itinerant Fidler."

*Ref.*: Bristol, 1814, No. 2.

Owned by the Hereford, England, City Library and Art Gallery.

## 78. HEBE, *before* 1814

*Ref.*: Bristol, 1814, No. 3; S. T. Coleridge, "Essays on the Fine Arts," in Cottle, p. 207.

## 79. RAIN AT SEA, *before* 1814

*Ref.*: Bristol, 1814, No. 6.

## 80. A MOTHER WATCHING HER SLEEPING CHILD, 1814 [Pl. XXXII]

Oil on millboard: h. 23½; w. 18 inches.

Allston first called this "Virgin and Child" but later chose the less pretentious title.

*Ref.*: Allston to James McMurtrie, June 13 and October 25, 1816; Dunlap, II, 319, 322; Boston, Harding's Studio, 1839, No. 8 (James McMurtrie); Dana, No. 22; Sweetser, pp. 70, 188; Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, 1881, No. 217 (Mrs. Gurney).

Owned by Mrs. John Briggs Potter, Boston.

## 81. SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE, 1814 [Pl. XXX]

Canvas: h. 44; w. 33½ inches.

Painted for Josiah Wade of Bristol; inherited from him by George T. Barnard, who sold it in 1864 to the National Portrait Gallery. Coleridge was forty-two years old when this portrait was painted. Engraved by Samuel Cousins. A replica is in Jesus College, Cambridge.

*Ref.*: Dunlap, II, 316; Dana, No. 17; Sweetser, pp. 73, 189; Flagg, pp. 104-8; E. H. Coleridge, *Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, II, 572, n. 2; Lawrence Hutton, *Harper's Magazine*, LXXXV (1892), 783.

Owned by the National Portrait Gallery, London, England.

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82. BENJAMIN WEST, 1814 [Pl. XXXI]

Canvas: h. 30; w. 25 inches.

The head was painted in 1814; the drapery and background were added in 1837.

Ref.: Boston, Athenaeum, 1837, No. 36, and 1838, No. 84; Boston, Harding's Studio, 1839, No. 21; Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, 1881, No. 225; Flagg, p. 38; *Washington Allston, 1779-1843*, The Detroit Institute of Arts and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 1947, No. 13.

Owned by the Boston Athenaeum, Boston.

83. DR. KING OF CLIFTON, 1814

R. H. Dana says that this was painted at the same time as the "Coleridge."

Ref.: Dana, No. 18; Mrs. Jameson, *Athenaeum* (London), 1844, p. 16; Sweetser, pp. 73, 189; Flagg, p. 108.

84. MRS. KING, 1814

Ref.: Mrs. Jameson, *Athenaeum* (London), 1844, p. 16; Dana, No. 19; Sweetser, pp. 74, 189.

85. ITALIAN LANDSCAPE, 1814

Canvas: h. 34; w. 72 inches. Signed at l.r.: "W. Allston, 1814."

Mrs. Jameson, *Athenaeum* (London), p. 16, mentions "a large Italian landscape" painted in Bristol for Vanderhorst, the uncle of the artist.

Owned by the Bristol Museum and Art Gallery, Bristol, England.

86. A SEAPIECE, 1814

Mrs. Jameson, *Athenaeum* (London), p. 16, mentions a seapiece, also painted at Bristol for Mr. Vanderhorst.

87. THE AGONY OF JUDAS, 1814

"The finest head I ever painted, and for effect the best thing I ever did, or ever expect to do, was the agony of Judas, which I painted in Bristol, England. I showed it to a few friends who said that its effect upon them was as dreadful as it was upon me; but I destroyed it in a few days, and for reasons which perhaps I could not make others understand as I felt them. It was not merely the distress I felt at looking on it, for I might have disposed of it and never seen it again, but I could not endure the thought of deriving an intellectual gratification or professional reputation and pleasure from what I believed to be so dreadful a reality" (recorded by R. H. Dana).

Ref.: Flagg, p. 364.

88. (?) ROBERT SOUTHEY, 1814

The existence of such a portrait rests on a single unsupported statement (Sweetser) that Allston is said to have painted Southey's portrait during this stay at Bristol. Its existence seems doubtful.

Ref.: Sweetser, pp. 74, 189.



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## 89. ELIZABETH TAYLOR, 1814

Elizabeth Taylor was Allston's cousin; she was the daughter of his uncle, Mr. E. Vanderhorst, and married J. Duncombe Taylor of Bristol. Allston mentions the sittings for a portrait in a letter to her of October 22, 1814.

## 90. DONNA MENCIA IN THE ROBBERS' CAVERN, 1815 [Pl. XXXIII]

Canvas: h. 56; w. 45 inches. Signed at l.r.: "W. Allston, 1815."

From *Gil Blas*, Book I, chapter 10.

Ref.: Allston to James McMurtrie, June 13, 1816; London, British Institution, 1816, No. 133; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, 1817, No. 50; Boston, Harding's Studio, 1839, No. 33 (Colonel William Drayton, of South Carolina); Sweetser, pp. 79, 189 (Mrs. General Barstow, Philadelphia); Flagg, pp. 111, 122; *Washington Allston, 1779-1843*, The Detroit Institute of Arts and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 1947, No. 17.

Owned by the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, The M. and M. Karolik Collection.

## 91. SILENCE, before 1816

James McMurtrie to Allston, April 5, 1816: "Your two small paintings of *Silence* and *Diana* would have been purchased immediately."

Ref.: Dana, No. 92.

## 92. REBECCA AT THE WELL, 1816 [Pl. XXXIV]

Canvas: h. 30; w. 36 inches. Signed at l.r.: "W. Allston, 1816."

Purchased from the artist by Mr. M. Van Schaick of New York.

Ref.: Allston to M. Van Schaick, November 13, 1816; Allston to W. Irving, May 9, 1817; New York, National Academy of Design, 1826; Mrs. Jameson, *Athenaeum* (London), 1844, p. 41; Sweetser, pp. 79, 189; The Detroit Institute of Arts, *The World of the Romantic Artist*, 1944, No. 34; *Washington Allston, 1779-1843*, The Detroit Institute of Arts and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 1947, No. 18.

Owned by the Dana Collection, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

## 93. MORNING IN ITALY, 1817

Ref.: London, British Institution, 1817, No. 150; Sweetser, pp. 79, 189.

## 94. ISAAC OF YORK, 1817 [Pl. XXXV]

Canvas: h. 30; w. 24½ inches.

From Sir Walter Scott's *Ivanhoe* (1819).

The head was painted as a study; the name "Isaac of York" was given to it in the exhibit of 1833. Bought by the Boston Athenaeum in 1833.

Ref.: Boston, Athenaeum, 1828, No. 146 (or 148 or 171); Boston, Athenaeum, 1833, No. 38; Boston, Harding's Studio, 1839, No. 19; Dana, No. 58; Sweetser, p. 187; Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, 1881, No. 220; Flagg, p. 272; *Washington Allston, 1779-1843*, The Detroit Institute of Arts and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 1947, No. 14.

Owned by the Boston Athenaeum, Boston.

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**95. HEAD OF A JEW, 1817**

Canvas: h. 29½; w. 25 inches.

Bought by the Boston Athenaeum in 1833. "Painted at one sitting" (Miss Clarke).

Ref.: Boston, Athenaeum, 1828, No. 148 (or 146 or 171); Boston, Harding's Studio, 1839, No. 20; Boston, Athenaeum, 1850, No. 75; Sarah Clarke, *Atlantic Monthly*, XV (1865), 136; Sweetser, p. 187; Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, 1881, No. 221.

Owned by the Boston Athenaeum, Boston.

**96. HEAD OF A JEW, 1817 [Pl. XXXVI]**

Canvas: h. 30½; w. 25½ inches.

Ref.: Boston, Athenaeum, 1828, No. 171 (or 146 or 148); Boston, Harding's Studio, 1839, No. 28 (J. S. Copley Greene); Boston, Athenaeum, 1850, No. 89 (J. S. Copley Greene); Sweetser, p. 188; *Washington Allston, 1779-1843*, The Detroit Institute of Arts and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 1947, No. 15.

Owned by the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

**97. SKETCH OF A POLISH JEW**

Canvas: h. 30; w. 25 inches. Signed on the back: "W. Allston fc. London 1817."

Ref.: Boston, Harding's Studio, 1839, No. 29 (Thomas Dwight); Boston, Athenaeum, 1850, No. 94 (T. Dwight); Sweetser, p. 187.

Owned by Mr. Victor Spark, New York City.

**98. CLYTIE, 1817**

Ref.: Sweetser, pp. 83, 189.

**99. WOUTER VAN TWILLER'S DECISION IN THE CASE OF WANDLE SCHOONHOVEN AND BARENT BLEEKER, 1817 [Pl. XXXVII]**

From Irving's "Knickerbocker's" *History*. Engraved for Murray's English edition by J. Romney (Vol. II, facing p. 130). The correspondence between Allston and Irving, May, 1817, is in Pierre M. Irving's *Life and Letters of Washington Irving*.

Ref.: Sweetser, p. 81.

**100. BELSHAZZAR'S FEAST, 1817-43 [Pl. XL]**

Canvas: h. 144½; w. 192½ inches.

The first sketches for "Belshazzar's Feast" were made in the spring of 1817. After his trip to Paris in the summer of that year, Allston worked on several other things and did not start the large canvas until the beginning of 1818. The composition must have been well blocked in when he rolled it up for transportation to America, for he expected to be able to finish it with six to eight months' more work. The first list of subscribers was opened in 1820, and a form of advance purchase, the "Tripartite Indenture," was drawn up. The picture was unrolled in September, 1820. Gilbert Stuart criticized the

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perspective severely, and the artist unfortunately undertook to alter the perspective, which meant beginning the composition all over again. He worked on it until 1828, altering it again and again without ever being able to satisfy himself. In 1827 the second "Tripartite Indenture" was signed, with some changes in the list of subscribers. In 1828 Allston's studio was sold, and he had to move to smaller quarters. The painting was rolled up until 1839, when he began to work on it again in the Cambridgeport studio in a new style. The picture was still unfinished at the time of his death.

*Ref.*: Allston's correspondence with Irving, McMurtrie, Leslie, and Cogdell, quoted by Flagg, gives most of the chronology, as do letters to Verplanck, Loammi Baldwin, Jarvis, Harding, and Mrs. Channing. Arthur Dexter (*Memorial History of Boston*, IV, 395) places the original purchase agreement in 1820, at the time the picture was first set up and of Stuart's criticism. The "Tripartite Indenture" of May 9, 1827, in the Boston Athenaeum is a renewal of an earlier agreement, not the original as is usually assumed. Dunlap, II, 329, 331; Mrs. Jameson, *Athenaeum* (London), 1844, p. 39; Dana, No. 26, and numerous other entries, Nos. 61, 68, 89, 96, 101, 117; R. H. Dana, Jr., *Journal*, I, 75-82, 104-5; Boston, Corinthian Gallery, 1844; Boston, Athenaeum, 1850, No. 107; Boston, Athenaeum, 1871, No. 211; Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, 1881, No. 201; Sweetser, pp. 120-30; Flagg, pp. 71, 73-75, 144, 152, 166-67, 210, 226, 250, 327, 334-53, 391, 422-25.

Owned by the Dana Collection, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

### 101. BELSHAZZAR'S FEAST: STUDY, 1817 [Pl. XXXVIII]

Sepia on millboard: h. 25½; w. 34¼ inches.

First study, in outline and chiaroscuro. This is probably the "highly finished sketch of it" mentioned in Allston's letter to Washington Irving, May 8, 1817.

*Ref.*: Unpublished portion of the *Journal* of R. H. Dana, Jr., July 12, 1843; Boston, Athenaeum, 1847, No. 2, and 1850, No. 106; Sweetser, pp. 83, 119, 187; Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, 1881, No. 101; Flagg, pp. 71, 334; *Washington Allston, 1779-1843*, The Detroit Institute of Arts and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 1947, No. 24.

Owned by the Dana Collection, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

### 102. BELSHAZZAR'S FEAST: COLOR STUDY, 1817 [Pl. XXXIX]

Oil on millboard: h. 25½; w. 34¼ inches.

*Ref.*: Unpublished portion of the *Journal* of R. H. Dana, Jr., July 12, 1843; Boston, Athenaeum, 1847, No. 2, and 1857, No. 290; Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, 1881, No. 267; *Washington Allston, 1779-1843*, The Detroit Institute of Arts and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 1947, No. 25.

Owned by the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. (Bequest of Ruth Charlotte Dana.)

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### 103. STUDY OF VERONESE'S "MARRIAGE AT CANA," 1817

Paper on canvas: h. 21½; w. 27½ inches. Inscribed on the back: "Paris. Copied by W. Allston from a picture by Paul Veronese in Paris 1817."

Allston made this study while on a visit to Paris in 1817 with William Collins and R. H. Leslie.

Ref.: Boston, Athenaeum, 1847, No. 143; W. Wilkie Collins, *Memoirs of the Life of William Collins*, II, 240; Sweetser, p. 36; Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, 1881, No. 243; Flagg, p. 126.

Owned by the Dana Collection, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

### 104. STUDY OF TITIAN'S "ADORATION OF THE MAGI," 1817

Allston made a free study of Titian's picture in the Louvre during his visit with Collins and Leslie. The study was of a portion containing a white horse and three figures. Allston gave the study to Coleridge, who kept it in his sitting room at Highgate and who was fond of telling how an art dealer mistook it for a Titian. James Fenimore Cooper, Emerson, and Leslie all repeat the story. Coleridge bequeathed the picture to Mrs. Gilman.

Ref.: J. F. Cooper, *Gleanings in Europe: England*; Mrs. Anna Gilman to Allston, July 2, 1842; C. H. Leslie to R. H. Dana, January 28, 1844; Dana, Nos. 76, 81, 108; Emerson, *English Traits*.

### 105. JACOB'S DREAM, 1817 [Pl. XLIII]

Canvas: h. 62; w. 94 inches.

Purchased by Lord Egremont for Petworth, where it still remains. Engraved in *Outlines and Sketches* (1850).

Ref.: Allston to McMurtrie, 1817, quoted by Dunlap, II, 324; London, Royal Academy, 1819, No. 309; Dunlap, II, 324, 326, 331; W. Wilkie Collins, *Memoirs of the Life of William Collins*, II, 242; Mrs. Jameson, *Athenaeum* (London), 1844, p. 16; Dana, Nos. 24, 63; C. H. Leslie, *Autobiographical Recollections*, p. 205; Sweetser, pp. 84, 189; Flagg, pp. 73, 129, 132, 139, 142, 152, 156, 176, 227, 310, 391, 424.

Owned by Lord Leconfield, Petworth, Sussex, England.

### 106. URIEL IN THE SUN, 1817 [Pl. XLI]

Canvas: h. 97½; w. 78 inches. Inscribed on the back: "W. ALLSTON 1817."

From *Paradise Lost*. Painted in five weeks in the autumn of 1817. The passage illustrated is in Book II, lines 645 ff. It was awarded £150 by the British Institution and purchased by the Marquis of Stafford; passed from the collection of the Duke of Sutherland to the Dana family.

Ref.: C. H. Leslie to Washington Irving, December 20, 1817 (*Autobiographical Recollections*, p. 205); Allston to Irving, March 13, 1818; London, British Institution, 1818, No. 1; Dunlap, II, 331; Dana, No. 24; Sweetser, pp. 81, 189;

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Flagg, pp. 72-73, 129-30; *Washington Allston, 1779-1843*, The Detroit Institute of Arts and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 1947, No. 23.

Owned by the Dana Collection, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

107. ELIJAH IN THE DESERT, 1818 [Pl. XLII]

Canvas: h. 50; w. 70 inches. Signed twice on the back: "W. Allston 1818" and "W. Allston A.R.A."

Taken to America in 1818; sold in 1832 to Henry Labouchere, afterward Lord Taunton, for £1,500; purchased from his estate in 1870 for \$4,000 and given to the newly founded Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, to become its Accession No. 1.

Ref.: London, British Institution, 1818, No. 242; Dunlap, II, 329, 331; Dana, Nos. 27, 72, 97; London, Royal Academy, 1870, No. 129; Boston, Athenaeum, 1871, No. 210; Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, 1881, No. 224; New York, Whitney Museum, *A Century of American Landscape Painting*, 1938, No. 6; Detroit Institute of Arts, *The World of the Romantic Artist*, 1944, No. 35; Chicago, The Art Institute of Chicago, *The Hudson River School*, 1945, No. 4; *Washington Allston, 1779-1843*, The Detroit Institute of Arts and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 1947, No. 20.

Owned by the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

108. A SCHEPEN DOING DUTY TO A BURGOMASTER'S JOKE, 1818

From Irving's "Knickerbocker's" *History of New York* (1809). Painted for a third edition of "Knickerbocker's" *History* (London: Murray, 1823). Used in the "Sunnyside Edition" (New York: G. P. Putnam, 1860).

Allston's letter to Irving, March 13, 1818, describes the design. Irving wrote from Dresden to C. R. Leslie, December 2, 1822, asking him to get all the original drawings for him and particularly this one by Allston. The drawing, to Allston's surprise and chagrin, gave offense to the New York Dutch, who resented it as a "calumny" (see Allston's letter to G. C. Verplanck, April 19, 1819, in New-York Historical Society).

Ref.: Pierre M. Irving, *Washington Irving*, I, 397; C. R. Leslie, *Autobiographical Recollections*, pp. 205, 207, 248.

109. THE SISTERS, before 1818 [Pl. XLIV]

Canvas: h. 49½; w. 38 inches. Paper label on back: "Cambridgeport, January 29, 1839. Received of Francis Alexander fifteen hundred dollars for the picture The Sisters painted by me."

The position of one figure was adopted from Titian's "Girl Holding a Jewel Casket," now in the collection of the Earl of Cowper, Panshanger. The title was suggested by Coleridge.

Ref.: Boston, Harding's Studio, 1839, No. 39 (Francis Alexander); Dana, No. 100; Sweetser, pp. 114, 187; Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, 1881, No. 227;

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Flagg, pp. 192, 318; *Washington Allston, 1779-1843*, The Detroit Institute of Arts and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 1947, No. 19.

Owned by Mrs. Algernon Coolidge, Boston.

110. SAMUEL WILLIAMS, *before 1818* [Pl. XLV]

Canvas: h. 56; w. 44 inches.

Samuel Williams was a Boston merchant who went to London in 1796 and died at Boston in 1841. He acted as Allston's banker in London.

Ref.: Boston, Athenaeum, 1835, No. 60 (T. Williams); Boston, Harding's Studio, 1839, No. 34 (Timothy Williams); Boston, Athenaeum, 1850, No. 62 (Mrs. W. Pratt); Sweetser, p. 189; Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, 1881, No. 203; Pickering Genealogy, No. 239.

Owned by Mr. Theodore Lyman, Brookline, Massachusetts.

111. MRS. SIDMONS, *before 1818*

Board: h. 12; w. 9 inches. Paper label on back: "Allston (Washington) #18 Mrs. Siddons From the Caleb Lyon Collection."

Traditional title. It belongs stylistically to the years 1809-18. In spite of the dramatic pose, it does not seem impossible that this is one of the series of family portraits which, like Nos. 61 and 62, have a strongly pictorial character.

Owned by Mrs. Charles Scribner, New York City.

112. HERMIA AND HELENA, *before 1818*

From *Midsummer Night's Dream*. In 1820 the picture was in the possession of a Mr. Visger, of Bristol, England.

Ref.: London, British Institution, 1818; Dana, Nos. 71, 103; W. Wilkie Collins, *Memoirs of the Life of William Collins*, II, 242; Sweetser, pp. 83, 189; Flagg, pp. 164, 251.

113. THE REPOSE IN EGYPT, *before 1818*

Formerly in the collection of the Earl of Egremont, Petworth, Sussex.

Ref.: Sweetser, pp. 85, 189.

113A. CONTEMPLATION, *before 1818*

Canvas: h. 26; w. 27½ inches.

A girl seated, reading, her cheek on her left hand. White bodice, green skirt; wooded background.

Ref.: C. H. Collins Baker, *Petworth Catalogue* (London, 1920), No. 341.

Owned by Lord Leconfield, Petworth, Sussex, England.

114. STORM AT SEA, 1818

"Sketch, in watercolor, of the packet ship 'Old Galen' in a storm, when the artist and the owner of the picture were fellow passengers in 1818. Drawn at sea" (Exhibition catalogue, 1850).

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*Ref.*: Boston, Harding's Studio, 1839, No. 45 (Colonel Perkins); Boston, Athenaeum, 1850, No. 77 (T. H. Perkins); Sweetser, p. 91; Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, 1881, No. 275 (Mrs. Franklin Dexter).

115. POLYPHEMUS IMMEDIATELY AFTER HIS EYE WAS PUT OUT, GROPING ABOUT HIS CAVERN FOR THE COMPANIONS OF ULYSSES, 1818

*Ref.*: Boston, Athenaeum, 1827, No. 309 (L. Baldwin); Boston, Harding's Studio, 1839, No. 6 (James F. Baldwin); Sweetser, p. 188; Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, 1881, No. 235 (Mrs. George R. Baldwin).

## VII. BOSTON AND CAMBRIDGEPORT, 1818-43

116. EDWIN, 1819

From Beattie's *The Minstel*. James Beattie (1735-1803) published the first part of *The Minstrel* in 1771, the second part in 1774.

*Ref.*: Allston to William Collins, May 18, 1821 (Dana Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society); Dunlap, II, 274; Boston, Harding's Studio, 1839, No. 9 (Robert Gilmor, Baltimore); Sweetser, p. 190.

117. MOONLIGHT LANDSCAPE, 1819 [Pl. XLVI]

Canvas: h. 24; w. 35 inches.

*Ref.*: Allston to William Collins, May 1, 1821 (Dana Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society); *The Atlantic Souvenir*, 1828; Boston, Athenaeum, 1829, No. 130; Boston, Harding's Studio, 1839, No. 24 (Dr. Bigelow); Boston, Athenaeum, 1850, No. 91, and 1857, No. 222; Sweetser, pp. 115, 188 (B. Bigelow, Boston); Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, 1881, No. 215 (Mrs. Jacob Bigelow); *Washington Allston, 1779-1843*, The Detroit Institute of Arts and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 1947, No. 26.

Owned by the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

118. LANDSCAPE, TIME AFTER SUNSET, *ca.* 1819

*Ref.*: Allston to William Collins, May 18, 1821 (Allston speaks of a "sunset" as the third picture painted after his return, which was thus probably painted about 1819; this picture belonged to the Codman family; Boston, Athenaeum, 1827, No. 33 (C. R. Codman); Boston, Harding's Studio, 1839, No. 18 (Charles Codman); Boston, Athenaeum, 1850, No. 86 (C. R. Codman); Sweetser, pp. 115, 188; Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, 1881, No. 226 (James M. Codman).

119. THE FLIGHT OF FLORIMELL, 1819 [Frontispiece]

Canvas: h. 36; w. 28 inches.

From Spenser's *Faerie Queene*. The episode illustrated is the first appearance of Florimell, Book III, Canto I, stanzas 14-18.

*Ref.*: Allston to Verplanck, April 19, 1819; Allston to C. R. Leslie, November 15, 1819, and to William Collins, May 18, 1821 (Dana Papers, Massachusetts

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Historical Society); Boston, Athenaeum, 1827, No. 18 (L. Baldwin); Boston, Harding's Studio, 1839, No. 5 (James F. Baldwin); Dana, No. 65; Sweetser, pp. 111, 190; Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, 1881, No. 223 (Mrs. Baldwin); Flagg, p. 162; E. P. Richardson, *Bulletin of the Detroit Institute of Arts*, XXIV (1944-45), 1; Detroit Institute of Arts, *The World of the Romantic Artist*, 1944, No. 27; Chicago, The Art Institute of Chicago, *The Hudson River School*, 1945, No. 5; *Washington Allston, 1779-1843*, The Detroit Institute of Arts and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 1947, No. 27.

Owned by the Detroit Institute of Arts, Detroit.

### 120. BEATRICE, 1819 [Pl. XLVII]

Canvas: h. 29½; w. 24½ inches.

Dante's Beatrice, not Shakespeare's. The translation of Dante by Henry Francis Cary, which appeared in 1805-12, roused much interest in Dante and probably was the source of inspiration for this picture.

Ref.: Allston to C. R. Leslie, November 15, 1819; Boston, Athenaeum, 1827, No. 37 (T. Lyman); Boston, Harding's Studio, 1839, No. 10 (Samuel A. Eliot); Mrs. Jameson, *Athenaeum* (London), 1844, p. 41; Sweetser, pp. 111, 187; Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, 1881, No. 232 (Heirs of Mrs. Samuel Eliot); Flagg, p. 161; *Washington Allston, 1779-1843*, The Detroit Institute of Arts and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 1947, No. 28.

Owned by Miss Ellen Bullard, Boston.

### 121. ITALIAN SHEPHERD BOY, 1819 [Pl. XLVIII]

Board: h. 21; w. 17 inches. Signed on the back: "W. Allston 1819."

Said to have been painted for a member of the Borland family. It remained in the family of William Gibson Borland until sold to the present owner. Allston used for the figure a drawing made at Rome (Dana Collection, Cambridge, Mass.).

Ref.: Allston to W. Collins, May 18, 1821 ("a small figure"); E. P. Richardson, *Bulletin of the Detroit Institute of Arts*, XXIV (1944-45), 3; Detroit Institute of Arts, *The World of the Romantic Artist*, 1944, No. 28; *Washington Allston, 1779-1843*, The Detroit Institute of Arts and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 1947, No. 29.

Owned by the Detroit Institute of Arts, Detroit.

### 122. JEREMIAH DICTATING HIS PROPHECY OF THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM TO BARUCH THE SCRIBE, 1820 [Pl. XLIX]

Canvas: h. 89½; w. 74½ inches. Signed on the back: "W. Allston A.R.A. 1820."

From Jeremiah, chapter 36. Painted for Miss Gibbs, the sister-in-law of Dr. Channing; purchased from her estate in 1866 by S. F. B. Morse for \$7,000 and presented to Yale College.

Ref.: Allston to C. R. Leslie, November 15, 1819, and to W. Collins, May 18, 1821; Boston, Athenaeum, 1827, No. 39 (Miss Gibbs); Boston, Harding's



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Studio, 1839, No. 2 (Miss Gibbs); Dana, Nos. 64, 98; Sweetser, pp. 107, 188; Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, 1881, No. 213; E. P. Peabody, *Reminiscences of Reverend William Ellery Channing, D.D.*, p. 325; Flagg, pp. 167, 247.

Owned by Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut.

123. STUDY FOR JEREMIAH DICTATING HIS PROPHECY

Board: h. 18½; w. 16½ inches. Inscribed on the back: "The original sketch of The Prophet Jeremiah Dictating to Baruch by Washington Allston."

Owned by Museum of Fine Arts, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut.

124. STUDY FOR THE HEAD OF JEREMIAH, 1819

Millboard: h. 22½; w. 19¼ inches.

Ref.: Boston, Athenaeum, 1850, No. 70 (R. H. Dana); Sweetser, pp. 120, 188; Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, 1881, No. 269 (Heirs of R. H. Dana).

Owned by St. Mary's Convent, Peekskill, New York.

125. SAUL AND THE WITCH OF ENDOR, 1820 [Pl. L]

Canvas: h. 36; w. 47 inches.

Painted for Colonel Thomas Handasyd Perkins, who also owned Nos. 59 and 113. It descended from Colonel Perkins to his son-in-law, William Howard Gardiner, and through the Gardiner family.

Ref.: *Charleston (S.C.) Courier*, June 1, 1820; Allston to William Collins, May 18, 1821; Boston, Athenaeum, 1827, No. 32 (Colonel Perkins); Dunlap, II, 331; Boston, Harding's Studio, 1839, No. 4 (Colonel Perkins); Dana, No. 29; Boston, Athenaeum, 1850, No. 99 (T. Perkins); Sweetser, p. 188; Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, 1881, No. 238 (William H. Gardiner); *Washington Allston, 1779-1843*, The Detroit Institute of Arts and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 1947, No. 30.

Owned by the Museum of Fine Arts, Amherst College, Amherst, Massachusetts.

126. LANDSCAPE, EVENING, 1821 [Pl. LI]

Canvas: h. 25½; w. 34 inches. Signed on the back: "W. Allston A.R.A. 1821."

Ref.: Allston to William Collins, May 18, 1821 (Dana Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society); Boston, Athenaeum, 1827, No. 36 (W. Dutton), and 1831, No. 84; Boston, Harding's Studio, 1839, No. 16 (Warren Dutton); Sweetser, p. 187; Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, 1881, No. 208 (Mrs. George M. Barnard, Jr.) (E. P. Peabody in her review of this exhibition speaks of the Dutton "Landscape" as the "sweet evening"); *Washington Allston, 1779-1843*, The Detroit Institute of Arts and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 1947, No. 31.

Owned by Mr. Victor Spark, New York City.

127. MIRIAM THE PROPHETESS, 1821

Canvas: h. 72; w. 48 inches.

Commissioned by David Sears, whose wife's name, Miriam, suggested the subject to Allston.

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*Ref.*: Allston to W. Collins, May 18, 1821; Allston to Leslie, May 20, 1821; Boston, Athenaeum, 1827, No. 30, and 1831, No. 28 (D. Sears); Boston, Harding's Studio, 1839, No. 3 (David Sears); Dana, No. 122; Sweetser, pp. 112, 188; Flagg, p. 167.

Owned by Richard D. Sears, Boston.

128. ITALIAN SHEPHERD BOY, *ca.* 1821–23

Canvas: h. 46; w. 34 inches (sight).

Allston used a drawing made at Rome for the pose (Dana Collection, Cambridge, Mass.).

*Ref.*: Boston, Harding's Studio, 1839, No. 22 (Robert C. Hooper); Boston, Athenaeum, 1850, No. 100 (R. C. Hooper); Sweetser, p. 188; Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, 1881, No. 236 (Mrs. R. C. Hooper).

Owned by Mrs. James R. Hooper, Boston.

129. MACBETH AND BANQUO MEETING THE WITCHES ON THE HEATH, *before* 1823

Allston speaks of this as unfinished and laid aside to work on "Belshazzar's Feast." It is possible that No. 186 is the surviving fragment of this composition.

*Ref.*: Allston to C. R. Leslie, February 7, 1823; Dana, No. 69; Flagg, p. 175.

130. MINNA AND BRENDA ON THE SEASHORE, *before* 1823

From Sir Walter Scott's *The Pirate* (1821).

*Ref.*: Allston to C. R. Leslie, February 7, 1823; Dana, No. 70; Flagg, p. 175.

131. MOTHER AND CHILD, 1829

Purchased by the Boston Athenaeum, July, 1829, from the artist for \$500; exchanged for a painting by Pieter Boel, March, 1837, plus \$100, given to John Watkins Brett, the picture dealer. Engraved by S. W. Cheney, for *The Token* of 1836.

*Ref.*: Allston to Loammi Baldwin, July 29, 1829; treasurer's report of the Athenaeum, December 9, 1829, and March, 1837. This was probably the "Mother and Child" exhibited in New York, National Academy of Design, 1841, No. 219; Mabel Munson Swan, *The Athenaeum Gallery, 1827–1873*, p. 17.

132. LANDSCAPE WITH FIGURES, *before* 1830

*Ref.*: Boston, Athenaeum, 1830, No. 97 (Mr. Weeks, New York City); New York, National Academy of Design, 1832, No. 23 (E. Weeks); *New York Mirror*, IX (1832), 394 ("... a dark-looking group of buildings and stretch of landscape ...").

133. ITALIAN LANDSCAPE, *ca.* 1830 [Pl. LII]

Canvas: h. 30½; w. 25½ inches.

*Ref.*: Boston, Athenaeum, 1830, No. 146 (S. A. Eliot), and 1831, No. 22; Boston, Harding's Studio, 1839, No. 11 (Samuel A. Eliot); Sarah Clarke, *Atlantic Monthly*, XV (1865), 130; Philadelphia, Centennial, 1876; Sweetser, pp. 115,

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187 (Mr. H. W. Foote); Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, 1881, No. 231 (Heirs of Mrs. Samuel A. Eliot); E. P. Richardson, *Bulletin of the Detroit Institute of Arts*, XXIV (1944-45), 1; Detroit Institute of Arts, *The World of the Romantic Artist*, 1944, No. 62; *Washington Allston, 1779-1843*, The Detroit Institute of Arts and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 1947, No. 32.

Owned by the Detroit Institute of Arts, Detroit.

134. SPALATRO'S VISION OF THE BLOODY HAND, 1831

From Mrs. Radcliffe's novel, *The Italian* (1797).

*Ref.*: Allston, probably to his brother-in-law, William Algernon Alston (who sent it to H. S. Ball), January 4, 1831 (Historical Society of Pennsylvania), speaks of it as two-thirds done and apologizes for the delay; the letter has no superscription but the painting was undertaken for Mr. Ball of South Carolina; New York, National Academy of Design, 1832, No. 70 (H. S. Ball); Dunlap, II, 331; Dana, Nos. 29, 57; Sweetser, pp. 101, 116 (Sweetser says that it was burned in 1873 in a fire of a mansion on the Hudson, but the date at least is an error—see below); John Taylor Johnston sale, New York, 1876, for \$3,900 (*The Aldine*, VIII [1876-77], 312); Flagg, p. 320.

135. A SPANISH GIRL IN REVERIE, 1831

Canvas: h. 30; w. 25 inches.

*Ref.*: Boston, Athenaeum, 1831, No. 135 (E. Clark); Allston's description of his method of painting this is recorded by Henry Greenough, quoted by Flagg, p. 194; Sweetser, pp. 112, 190; Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, 1881, No. 241a (Mrs. M. S. B. Thompson, Northampton).

Owned by the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City.

136. A ROMAN LADY READING, *ca.* 1831

Canvas: h. 30; w. 25 inches.

*Ref.*: Boston, Athenaeum, 1831, No. 210 (E. Dwight); Boston, Harding's Studio, 1839, No. 15 (E. Dwight); Boston, Athenaeum, 1846, No. 145, and 1850, No. 88 (E. Dwight); Dana, No. 118; Boston, Athenaeum, 1856, No. 89 (Charles H. Mills); Sweetser, pp. 113, 188; Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, 1881, No. 239 (Mrs. J. Eliot Cabot).

Owned by Mr. Hugh Cabot, Boston, Massachusetts.

137. A TUSCAN GIRL, 1831

Millboard: h. 17½; w. 14½ inches. Inscribed on the back: "A Tuscan Girl W. Allston A.R.A. pinxt 1831" (see Allston's *Lectures on Art and Poems*, p. 336).

*Ref.*: Boston, Athenaeum, 1832, No. 141 (D. Sears); Boston, Harding's Studio, 1839, No. 37 (David Sears); Dana, No. 87; Boston, Athenaeum, 1850, No. 73 (D. Sears); Sweetser, pp. 114, 188.

Owned by Mrs. J. J. Minot, Boston.

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138. **LORENZO AND JESSICA, 1832 [Pl. LIII]**  
 Millboard: h. 15; w. 18 inches. Inscribed on the back: "Jessica and Lorenzo.  
 'How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank!' *Merchant of Venice*, Act V,  
 Scene I. W. Allston A.R.A. pinxit 1832."  
 For a copy of this made by Sophia Peabody, afterward Mrs. Nathaniel  
 Hawthorne, see Emerson's *Letters*, II, 12 (April 22, 1836).  
*Ref.*: Boston, Athenaeum, 1832, supplement, No. 247; Boston, Harding's  
 Studio, 1839, No. 38 (Patrick T. Jackson); Dana, No. 115; Boston, Athe-  
 naeum, 1846, No. 9 (P. T. Jackson), and 1850, No. 84 (Mrs. P. T. Jackson);  
 Sweetser, pp. 114, 187; Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, 1881, No. 210 (Miss  
 Ellen Jackson); Flagg, p. 192.  
 Owned by Mr. John M. Cabot, Washington, D.C.
139. **THE YOUNG TROUBADOUR, ca. 1833**  
 Allston's poem "The Troubadour" is a companion piece to this. Flagg quotes  
 a letter from Allston to Jonathan Mason of December 27, 1833, reducing his  
 price for this to \$300.  
*Ref.*: Boston, Athenaeum, 1835, No. 71 (J. Bryant, Jr.); Boston, Harding's  
 Studio, 1839, No. 40 (J. Bryant, Jr.); Dana, No. 17; Boston, Athenaeum, 1850,  
 No. 80 (Mrs. J. Bryant, Jr.); Sweetser, p. 188, Flagg, pp. 193, 272.
140. **GABRIEL SETTING THE WATCH AT THE GATES OF PARADISE, 1833**  
 This composition, based upon Milton's *Paradise Lost*, Book IV, lines 539 ff., was  
 painted in 1833 and afterward destroyed by the artist. Six engravings in *Out-  
 lines and Sketches*, made from Allston's chalk outlines and tracings from parts  
 of the composition, represent it. The title varies in two different issues of  
*Outlines and Sketches*. The earliest copies have "Michael," but this was  
 corrected to "Gabriel" in later copies.  
*Ref.*: Dunlap, *Diary*, III, 742 (September 17, 1833), and *History*, II, 333; Dana,  
 No. 31; Sweetser, p. 138.
141. **GABRIEL**  
 Chalk outline on millboard: h. 23½; w. 20¼ inches.  
 From "Gabriel Setting the Watch at the Gates of Paradise."  
*Ref.*: See the above. *Outlines and Sketches*, 1850, No. 1; Boston, Museum of  
 Fine Arts, 1881, No. 277.  
 Owned by the Dana Collection, Cambridge, Massachusetts.
142. **THE EVENING HYMN, 1835 [Pl. LIV]**  
 Canvas: h. 29; w. 20 inches.  
*Ref.*: Boston, Harding's Studio, 1839, No. 17 (Warren Dutton); Dana, No. 40;  
 Boston, Athenaeum, 1850, No. 83 (L. Dutton), and 1857, No. 205; Sweetser,  
 pp. 113, 188; Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, 1881, No. 205 (Mrs. S. Hooper);

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*Washington Allston, 1779-1843*, The Detroit Institute of Arts and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 1947, No. 33.

Owned by the Estate of Thornton K. Lothrop, Boston.

143. LANDSCAPE, AMERICAN SCENERY: TIME, AFTERNOON, WITH A SOUTHWEST HAZE, 1835 [Pl. LV]

Canvas: h. 18½; w. 24½ inches.

Ref.: Allston to Dr. Walter Channing, July 2, 1835; Boston, Harding's Studio, 1839, No. 14 (Edmund Dwight); Boston, Athenaeum, 1850, No. 82 (Edmund Dwight); Sweetser, p. 115; Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, 1881, No. 218.

Owned by the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. (Bequest of Edmund Dwight, 1900.)

144. ROSALIE, 1835 [Pl. LVI]

Canvas: h. 35½; w. 28½ inches.

Allston's poem "Rosalie" is the companion to this picture.

Ref.: Boston, Harding's Studio, 1839, No. 35 (Nathan Appleton); Mrs. Jameson, *Athenaeum* (London), 1844, p. 40; Boston, Athenaeum, 1850, No. 103, and 1871, No. 213 (N. Appleton); Sweetser, pp. 110, 187; Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, No. 222 (Nathan Appleton); Flagg, p. 392; *Washington Allston, 1779-1843*, The Detroit Institute of Arts and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 1947, No. 34.

Owned by the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities.

145. TITANIA'S COURT, before 1837 [Pl. LVII]

Outline in umber on canvas: h. 48½; w. 72½ inches.

From *Midsummer Night's Dream*, Act II, scene 2. "A Wood Queen of Fairies, with her train. QUEEN: Come, now a roundel and a fairy song: then for a third part of a minute, hence." Mrs. Jameson saw this in Allston's studio in 1837. Engraved in *Outlines and Sketches*.

Ref.: Mrs. Jameson, *Athenaeum* (London), 1844, p. 40; Boston, Athenaeum, 1847, No. 136, and 1851, No. 35; Sweetser, p. 188; Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, 1881, No. 254; Flagg, p. 349; *Washington Allston, 1779-1843*, The Detroit Institute of Arts and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 1947, No. 35.

Owned by the Dana Collection, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

146. FAIRIES ON THE SEASHORE, DISAPPEARING AT SUNRISE, before 1837

Engraved in *Outlines and Sketches* from the chalk tracing on gauze, after the original sketch on canvas. The original canvas—42½ by 37½ inches—was destroyed by the artist. Mrs. Jameson saw it in his studio in 1837.

Ref.: Mrs. Anna Jameson, *Athenaeum* (London), 1844, p. 40 (in her memory Mrs. Jameson confused this and the preceding, referring to them both as one composition).

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147. **SHIP IN A SQUALL, before 1837** [Pl. LVIII]  
 Chalk drawing on brown-primed canvas: h. 48½; w. 60 inches.  
 Mrs. Jameson saw this in Allston's studio in 1837. Engraved in *Outlines and Sketches*.  
*Ref.*: Mrs. Jameson, *Athenaeum* (London), 1844, p. 40; Dana, No. 121; Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, 1881, No. 252; Flagg, p. 400.  
 Owned by the Dana Collection, Cambridge, Massachusetts.
148. **COLOR SKETCH**  
 Millboard: h. 8; w. 9¾ inches.  
 Sketch for "Ship in a Squall" in blue, white, and umber, showing merely the general disposition of the color: warm and cool, blue and brown.  
 Owned by the Dana Collection, Cambridge, Massachusetts.
149. **THE DEATH OF KING JOHN, ca. 1837** [Pl. LIX]  
 Millboard: h. 28; w. 37¼ inches.  
 Unfinished oil painting. Mrs. Jameson says that Allston was working on this at the time of her visit in 1837. The scene is the orchard in Swinstead Abbey; Prince Henry, Salisbury, Bigot, and the dying king (*King John*, Act V, scene 7).  
*Ref.*: Mrs. Jameson, *Athenaeum* (London), 1844, p. 39; Boston, *Athenaeum*, 1847, No. 138, 1850, No. 110, and 1851, No. 162; Sweetser, pp. 113, 187; Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, 1881, No. 247; Flagg, p. 271.  
 Owned by the Dana Collection, Cambridge, Massachusetts.
150. **LANDSCAPE, before 1839**  
 Destroyed by fire in Schenectady, New York, in 1912.  
*Ref.*: Boston, Harding's Studio, 1839, No. 31 (Rev. Dr. Lowell); Boston, *Athenaeum*, 1850, No. 96 (Rev. Dr. Lowell), and 1857, I, No. 212; 1857, II, No. 259; Sweetser, p. 189.
151. **THE BRIDE, 1840**  
 Burned in the great fire of February 24, 1862, in Boston.  
*Ref.*: Margaret Fuller, *Dial*, I (1840), 83, quotes two sonnets written about it by Samuel Gray Ward; Sweetser, p. 145; Samuel Adams Drake, *Historic Fields and Mansions of Middlesex*, p. 194.
152. **AMY ROBSART, 1840**  
 Canvas: h. 30½; w. 25½ inches.  
 From Sir Walter Scott's *Kenilworth* (1821). Charles Sumner in a letter to Horatio Greenough, September 30, 1840, wrote: "Washington Allston has recently painted a beautiful woman, Amy Robsart..."  
*Ref.*: Boston, *Athenaeum*, 1850, No. 93 (J. A. Lowell); Sweetser, pp. 113, 187; Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, 1881, No. 202 (John Amory Lowell).  
 Owned by Mrs. Sumner Hollander, Boston.

VIII. UNDATED WORKS, ARRANGED IN ORDER OF THE  
EARLIEST REFERENCE TO THE TITLE

153. SKETCH IN WATERCOLORS

Ref.: Boston, Athenaeum, 1846, No. 5 (Dr. W. Channing).

154. THE SIBYL

Outline in chalk on brown-toned canvas: h. 83½; w. 59½ inches.

Left unfinished by the artist. Engraved in *Outlines and Sketches*.

Ref.: *Outlines and Sketches*, 1850; Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, 1881, No. 258; Flagg, p. 380.

Owned by the Dana Collection, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

155. THE SIBYL

Sketch on millboard: h. 17½; w. 14½ inches.

A smaller study than No. 154, the figure carried as far as an umber wash study, with a few corrections in chalk.

Ref.: Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, 1881, No. 255.

Owned by the Dana Collection, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

156. HELIODORUS DRIVEN FROM THE TEMPLE

Sketch in chalk on brown-toned canvas: h. 45½; w. 57 inches.

The subject is from II Maccabees 3:24-27. Engraved in *Outlines and Sketches*.

Ref.: *Outlines and Sketches*, 1850; Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, 1881, No. 257.

Owned by the Dana Collection, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

157. GIRL IN PERSIAN COSTUME (A TROUBADOUR)

Sketch in umber on canvas: h. 36; w. 28 inches.

Engraved in *Outlines and Sketches*.

Ref.: *Outlines and Sketches*, 1850; Boston, Athenaeum, 1857, No. 198 ("Troubadour, outline, Mrs. Allston, owner").

Owned by the Dana Collection, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

158. HEAD OF A WOMAN IN PROFILE

Canvas: h. 30; w. 25½ inches.

Unfinished, the underpainting only completed. Bust, facing left.

Ref.: Boston, Athenaeum, 1850, No. 74; 1851, No. 158; 1857, No. 308; Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, 1881, No. 270.

Owned by the Dana Collection, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

159. HEAD OF A WOMAN IN PROFILE

Canvas (oval): h. 11½; w. 9½ inches.

Unfinished painting. The same model as the preceding. Bust, facing right.

Ref.: Boston, Athenaeum, 1850, No. 68 (R. H. Dana); Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, 1881, No. 272 (Heirs of W. Allston).

Owned by Miss Rosamond Dana Wild, Kittery Point, Maine.

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### 160. UNA

Sketch on canvas: h. 31 $\frac{1}{2}$ ; w. 25 $\frac{1}{2}$  inches.

Unfinished painting. Figure seated on a bank in a forest, facing left.

*Ref.*: Boston, Athenaeum, 1850, No. 63 (Mrs. Allston); 1851, No. 157.

Owned by the Dana Collection, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

### 161. A LADY MUSING

Millboard: h. 24 $\frac{1}{2}$ ; w. 17 $\frac{1}{2}$  inches.

Unfinished painting. Similar composition to the preceding: a lady seated on a bank in a forest, facing right, holding a book. Possibly this is the "Lady Reading" exhibited at the Boston Athenaeum, 1847, No. 140; 1850, No. 65; 1857, No. 300.

*Collections*: Miss Ruth Charlotte Dana, 1901; Elizabeth Ellery Dana, 1939; Richard Dana Skinner, 1941.

Owned by Miss Elinor Skinner, New York City.

### 162. UNA SLEEPING IN A WOOD

Canvas: h. 30; w. 25 inches.

Unfinished painting carried fairly close to the completion of the impasto but not glazed. A pen drawing, nude, of a figure in the same pose, is in the Dana Collection.

*Ref.*: Sweetser, p. 188; Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, 1881, No. 240 (Mrs. John B. Hatch, Medford); Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, 1891 and 1893 (Miss Ruth Charlotte Dana).

Owned by the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York City.

### 163. SKETCH OF A FEMALE FIGURE

*Ref.*: Boston, Athenaeum, 1850, No. 78 (Mrs. Allston).

### 164. LANDSCAPE

*Ref.*: Boston, Athenaeum, 1850, No. 72, and 1853, No. 135 (J. E. Lodge).

### 165. LANDSCAPE

*Ref.*: Boston, Athenaeum, 1850, No. 79 (Miss S. A. Clarke).

### 166. LANDSCAPE: SKETCH

*Ref.*: Boston, Athenaeum, 1850, No. 97 (R. H. Dana); Sweetser, p. 188.

### 167. LANDSCAPE: A SKETCH

*Ref.*: Boston, Athenaeum, 1850, No. 88; 1851, No. 154; 1852, No. 21; 1853, No. 119 (F. Dexter).

### 168. LANDSCAPE

*Ref.*: Boston, Athenaeum, 1850, No. 109 (J. L. Motley).

### 169. INTERIOR OF A CHURCH

Perhaps this was connected in some way with Allston's design for the Shepard Congregational Church, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

*Ref.*: Boston, Athenaeum, 1850, No. 108 (J. Burnett).



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170. LANDSCAPE

*Ref.*: Boston, Athenaeum, 1853, No. 153, and 1854, No. 150 (S. Hooper).

171. THE STUDENT

Purchased by the Boston Athenaeum in 1855. In poor condition.

*Ref.*: Sweetser, p. 187; Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, 1881, No. 237.

Owned by the Boston Athenaeum, Boston.

172. ISABELLA OF SPAIN

The title occurs in a "Sales catalogue....Original paintings,...Property of Mr. William Beebe,...Baltimore, May 21, 1858. No. 76 Isabella of Spain by W. Allston. Frame, \$5.00. From the collection of the late Franklyn [*sic*] Dexter of Boston, Mass."

173. PORTRAIT OF MRS. SULLIVAN

The mother of Richard Sullivan.

*Ref.*: Sweetser, p. 187; Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, 1881, No. 230 (Richard Sullivan).

174. A CHILD'S PORTRAIT

*Ref.*: Sweetser, p. 188 (Rev. J. F. W. Ware, Boston).

175. THE INDIAN SUMMER

*Ref.*: Sweetser, p. 188 (Mrs. Judge Wells, Longwood).

176. PILOT-BOAT IN A STORM

This cannot be the same as No. 33.

*Ref.*: Sweetser, p. 188 (Mrs. John Codman).

177. LANDSCAPE

*Ref.*: Sweetser, p. 188 (Dr. Bigelow).

178. LANDSCAPE

Perhaps the same as No. 132.

*Ref.*: Sweetser, p. 189 (George Sherman, New York City).

179. MOONLIGHT LANDSCAPE

*Ref.*: Sweetser, p. 189 (William J. Flagg, New York City).

180. MASSACRE OF THE INNOCENTS

• *Ref.*: Sweetser, p. 190.

181. STUDY FOR A PORTRAIT OF LOAMMI BALDWIN

Loammi Baldwin (d. 1838), was a classmate of Allston at Harvard and a naval officer.

*Ref.*: Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, 1881, No. 273 (Mrs. Baldwin).

182. LADY SEATED ON A BANK

Canvas: h. 21; w. 17 inches.

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*Ref.*: Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, 1881, No. 298 (Miss M. E. Williams, Salem).

Owned by Mr. William Hennessy, Durham, New Hampshire.

### 183. IDEAL HEAD

Millboard: h. 29 $\frac{1}{4}$ ; w. 25 $\frac{1}{4}$  inches. Inscribed twice on the back: "W. Allston pinxt."

History unknown; acquired by gift in 1899.

Owned by the Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, Rhode Island.

## IX. INCOMPLETE AND FRAGMENTARY WORKS

[As a result of his slow method of painting in his later years, Allston had many unfinished works in his studio at the time of his death. The more complete compositions have been listed in the preceding catalogue. There are nearly three hundred items, including the drawings, in the Dana Collection, which includes almost everything in Allston's studio at the time of his death. The following are the principal fragments and studies, in addition to those already listed.]

### 184. THE ANGEL OF WRATH OVER JERUSALEM

Chalk study on canvas: h. 36 $\frac{3}{8}$ ; w. 29 $\frac{1}{2}$  inches.

First begun in 1829, rubbed out and begun again in 1840.

*Ref.*: Jarvis; Dana, No. 53; Flag, p. 271.

### 185. LOVER PLAYING A LUTE

Canvas: h. 30; w. 24 $\frac{1}{8}$  inches.

Only the flat underpainting of two figures.

*Ref.*: Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, 1881, No. 244.

### 186. TAVERN SCENE

Pencil and brush study on canvas: h. 27 $\frac{1}{8}$ ; w. 36 inches.

A Teniers-like interior, chiefly in pencil.

*Ref.*: Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, 1881, No. 260.

### 187. LANDSCAPE: MACBETH (?)

Outline on canvas: h. 48; w. 72 inches.

Very fragmentary; single figures in outline. Perhaps related to No. 129.

### 188. LADY SEATED, WITH TWO ATTENDANTS

Chalk study on canvas: h. 21 $\frac{1}{8}$ ; w. 16 $\frac{7}{8}$  inches.

### 189. SKETCH OF A SHEPHERD BOY; *on reverse*: EASTERN FEMALE FIGURE

Canvas: h. 23; w. 19 inches.

### 190. LANDSCAPE AND RUINS

Outline on millboard: h. 19 $\frac{1}{2}$ ; w. 29 $\frac{1}{4}$  inches.

### 191. FAMILY GROUP: PARENTS AND CHILD

Canvas: h. 37 $\frac{1}{4}$ ; w. 31 $\frac{1}{2}$  inches.

Underpainting, touched with chalk.

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### 192. MOTHER WITH CHILD IN HER LAP

Canvas: h. 37 $\frac{1}{4}$ ; w. 31 $\frac{1}{2}$  inches.

Underpainting.

Ref.: Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, 1881, No. 250.

### 193. STUDY OF A FOOT

Oil on millboard: h. 15 $\frac{7}{8}$ ; w. 23 $\frac{7}{8}$  inches.

Study from life, used for the "Witch of Endor."

### 194. FEMALE FIGURE SEATED ON A BANK

Chalk sketch on canvas: h. 27 $\frac{1}{4}$ ; w. 26 $\frac{3}{8}$  inches.

### 195. LANDSCAPE

Chalk, umber, and white on canvas: h. 28 $\frac{1}{8}$ ; w. 35 $\frac{1}{2}$  inches.

### 196. ITALIAN LANDSCAPE

Chalk on canvas: h. 25 $\frac{7}{8}$ ; w. 34 $\frac{1}{8}$  inches.

Very ruinous.

### 197. LANDSCAPE, INDIAN SUMMER

Canvas: h. 18 $\frac{1}{8}$ ; w. 22 $\frac{7}{8}$  inches.

In very bad state, much flaked.

## X. MISCELLANEOUS ACTIVITIES

### 1A. BUNKER HILL MONUMENT

Allston served on the committee, with Professor George Ticknor, Dr. Jacob Bigelow, Samuel Swett, and Loammi Baldwin, chairman, which selected a specific plan of the monument and reported to the monument association, July 1, 1825. This was the plan for the shaft which was erected.

Ref.: Levi S. Gould, *Ancient Middlesex*, 1905, p. 30.

### 2A. MONUMENT TO DR. WILLIAM ELLERY CHANNING, MOUNT AUBURN CEMETERY

After Channing's death in 1842 Allston furnished the design for the marble monument, of fine and distinctive design, about four feet high and eight feet square, erected in Mount Auburn. "The design was furnished by Mr. Allston ... and was executed in fine Italian marble by Mr. Alpheus Cary, without any deviation from the drawings sent by Mr. Allston" (*Report of the Committee Appointed by the Federal Street Congregational Society for Erecting a Monument to the Memory of Reverend Dr. Channing* [Boston, 1844], frontispiece and pp. 5-6).

### 3A. SHATTUCK MONUMENT, MOUNT AUBURN CEMETERY

The R. H. Dana notes (p. 36) say that Allston also designed this monument.

### 4A. SHEPARD CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, CAMBRIDGE

This church, now destroyed, was formed in 1829 by Abiel Holmes, father of Oliver Wendell Holmes, the poet, when the old First Parish of Cambridge

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became Unitarian. Sweetser (p. 133) says: "In 1830-31 the new society built a meeting-house, partly from plans furnished by Allston, who used to lead out his friends and visitors at evening to a point about a third of a mile southeast of the building, and bid them to admire it, repeating the lines:

"If thou wouldst view fair Melrose aright,  
Go visit it by the pale moonlight.'"

**5A. MARBLE MONUMENT TO GEORGE AND MARY CHANNING GIBBS, ST. MARY'S CHURCH, PORTSMOUTH, RHODE ISLAND**

This monument contains an inscription written by Dr. William Ellery Channing.

**6A. MARBLE TABLE**

This table was made in Rome about 1836 for Miss Sarah Gibbs "from a classic design . . . under the direction of Washington Allston." It is now owned by the Newport Historical Society, Newport, Rhode Island.

# Bibliography

The most important unpublished papers relating to Washington Allston are the Dana Papers in the Massachusetts Historical Society. These contain the manuscript notes for a life of Allston by the elder Richard Henry Dana; the reminiscences of Allston written by Leonard Jarvis at the request of Richard Henry Dana; Allston's sketchbooks and notebooks; and the largest group of Allston's own letters. Other important manuscript material is in the New-York Historical Society, the Pennsylvania Historical Society, the Yale University Library, and the Dana Collection, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Mr. H. W. L. Dana of Cambridge, Massachusetts, has in his custody the Dana Collection, the largest assemblage of Allston's work, including almost all his drawings, many paintings and the unfinished work left in the studio at his death, a portion of his library, and a small remnant of his collection of casts and other memorabilia, such as his palette, palette knife, and lay figure. A portion of these paintings and drawings is on deposit at the Fogg Museum of Art, Harvard University. Another portion of his library is owned by Mrs. Allston Dana, Wilton, Connecticut.

In addition to the exhibition catalogues listed, the catalogues of the annual exhibitions held at the Boston Athenaeum from 1828 on throw much light on Allston's work, especially the exhibition of 1850 (an Allston year, when the *Lectures on Art and Outlines and Sketches* were produced), which contained forty-eight paintings by Allston out of a total of two hundred and sixty-eight pictures.

The files of the *Boston Daily Advertiser*, the *Boston Sentinel*, the *New York Evening Post*, the *New York Courier-Enquirer*, the *New York Mirror*, the *Charleston (S.C.) Courier*, the *Charleston Southern Patriot*, and the *Charleston Mercury* also contain references to Allston and his works. Whenever I have used such references specifically, they will be found in the notes given in the text.

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*Philadelphia, The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts*

S. V. CLEVENGER, BUST OF WASHINGTON ALLSTON, 1840

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*Cambridge, Massachusetts, Mrs. Frank M. Clark*

THE BUCK'S PROGRESS, NO. I: THE INTRODUCTION OF A COUNTRY LAD  
TO A CLICK OF TOWN BUCKS, 1796 [*Cer. No. 2*]

PLATE III



*Andover, Massachusetts, Addison Gallery of American Art*

MAN IN CHAINS, 1800 [Cat. No. 18]

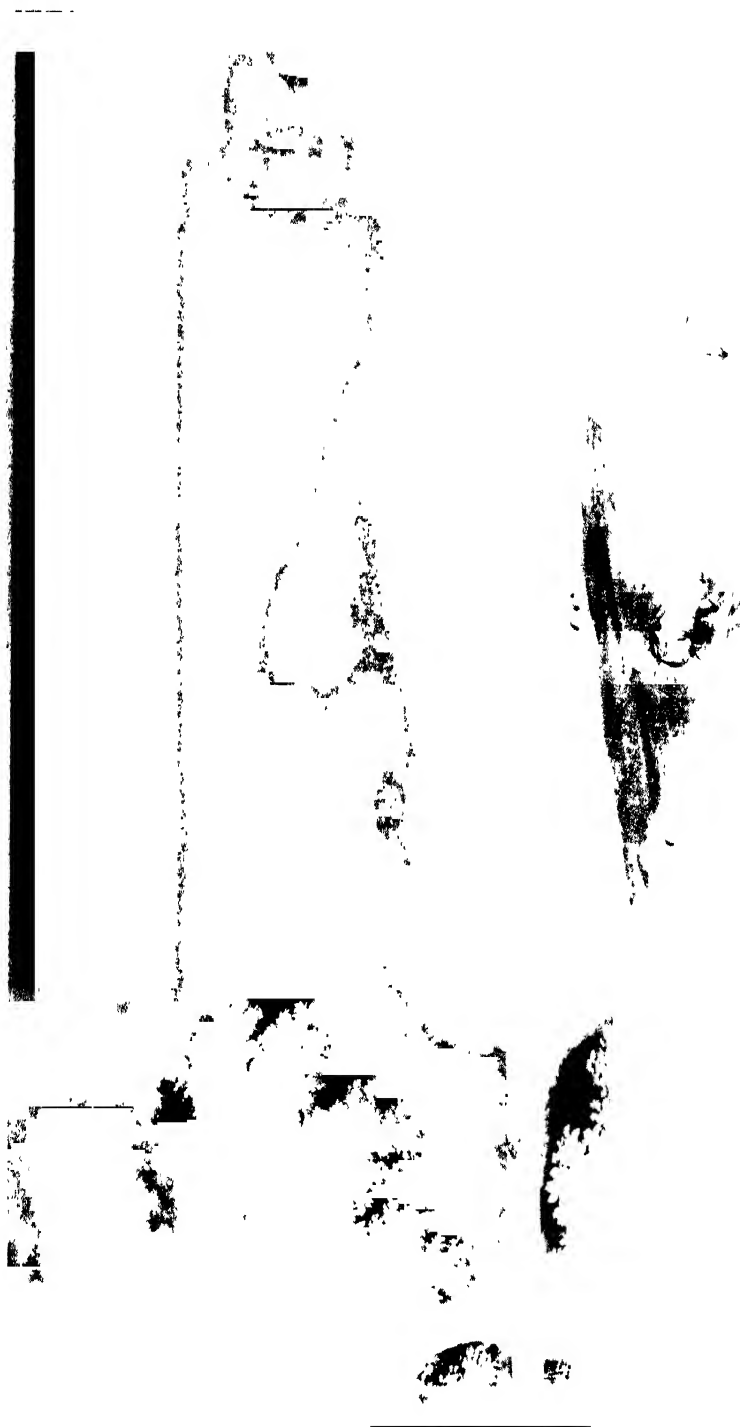
PLATE IV



*Newport, Rhode Island, Redwood Library and Athenaeum*

ROBERT ROGERS, 1800 [*Cat. No. 19*]

PLATE V



*Concord, Massachusetts, Concord Free Public Library*

LANDSCAPE, 1801-3 [Cat. No. 32]



PLATE VI



*Boston, Museum of Fine Arts*

RISE OF A THUNDERSTORM AT SEA, 1804 [*Cat. No. 33*]

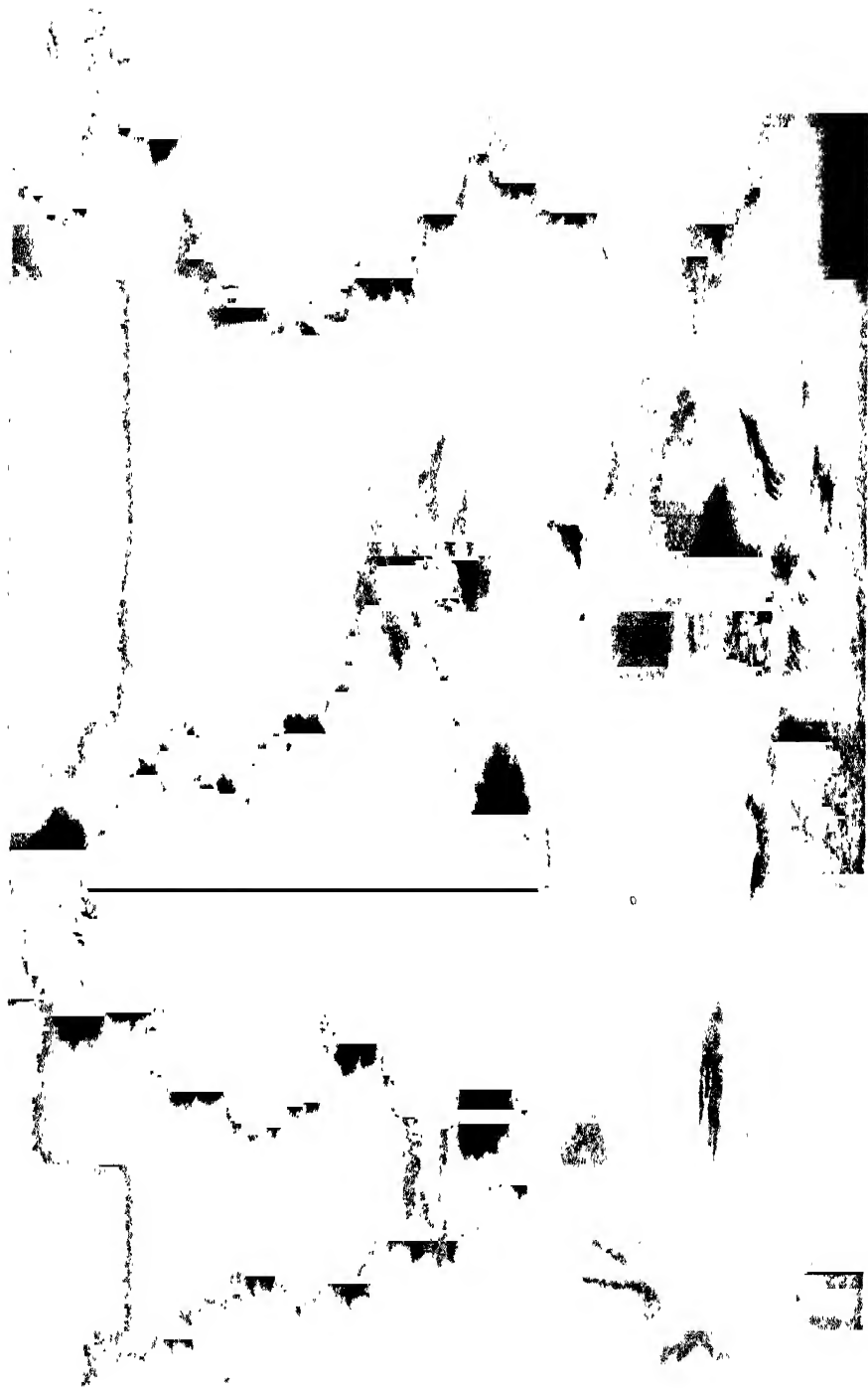
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*New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art*

THE DELUGE, 1804 [*Cat. No. 34*]

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*Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, The M. and M. Karolik Collection*

LANDSCAPE WITH A LAKE, 1804 [Cat. No. 36]

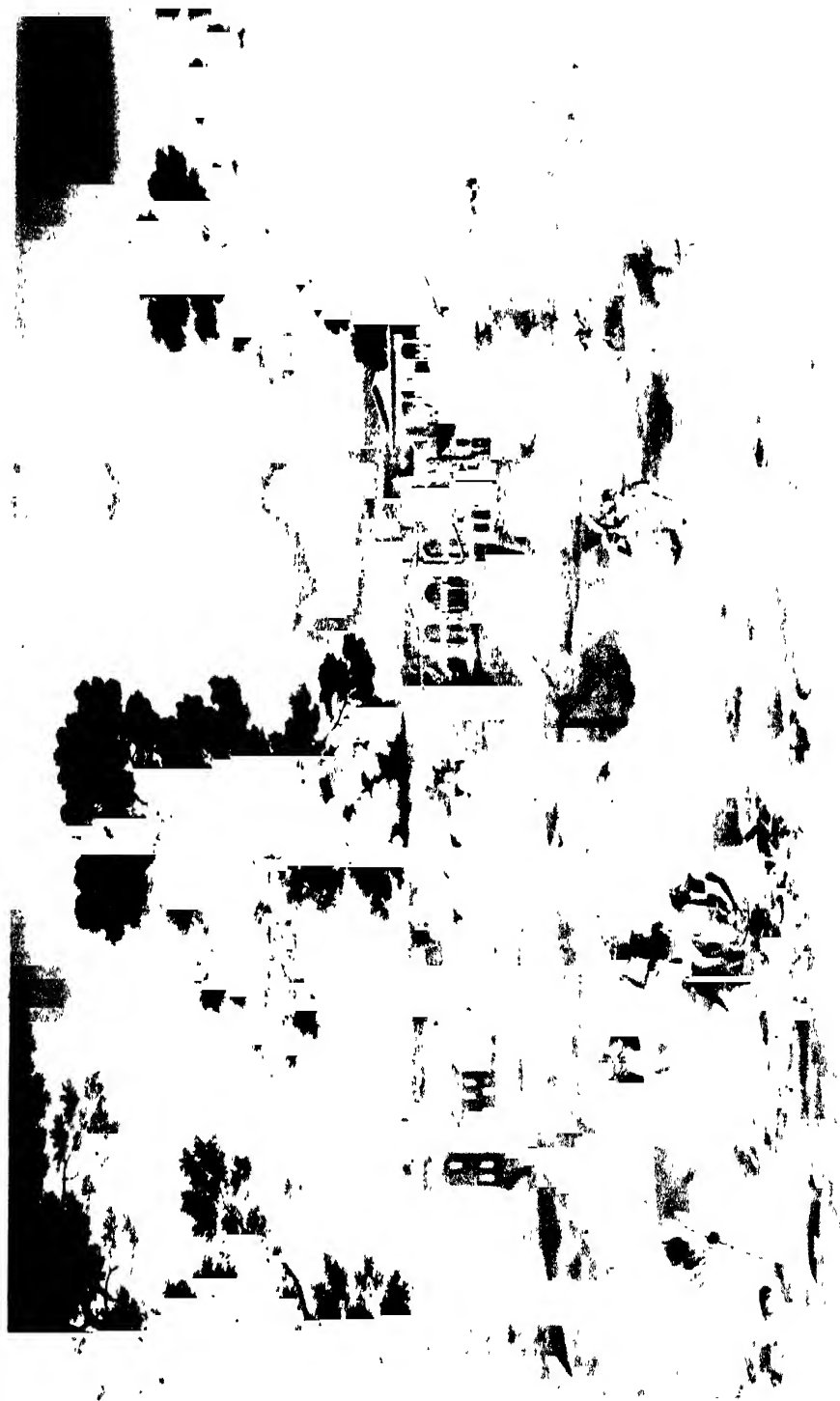
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*Boston, Mrs. Algerman Coolidge*

DIANA IN THE CHASE, OR SWISS SCENERY, 1805 [Cat. No. 37]

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*Andover, Massachusetts, Addison Gallery of American Art*

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*Boston, Museum of Fine Arts*

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*Cambridge, Massachusetts, Dana Collection*

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE, 1806 [*Cat. No. 40*]

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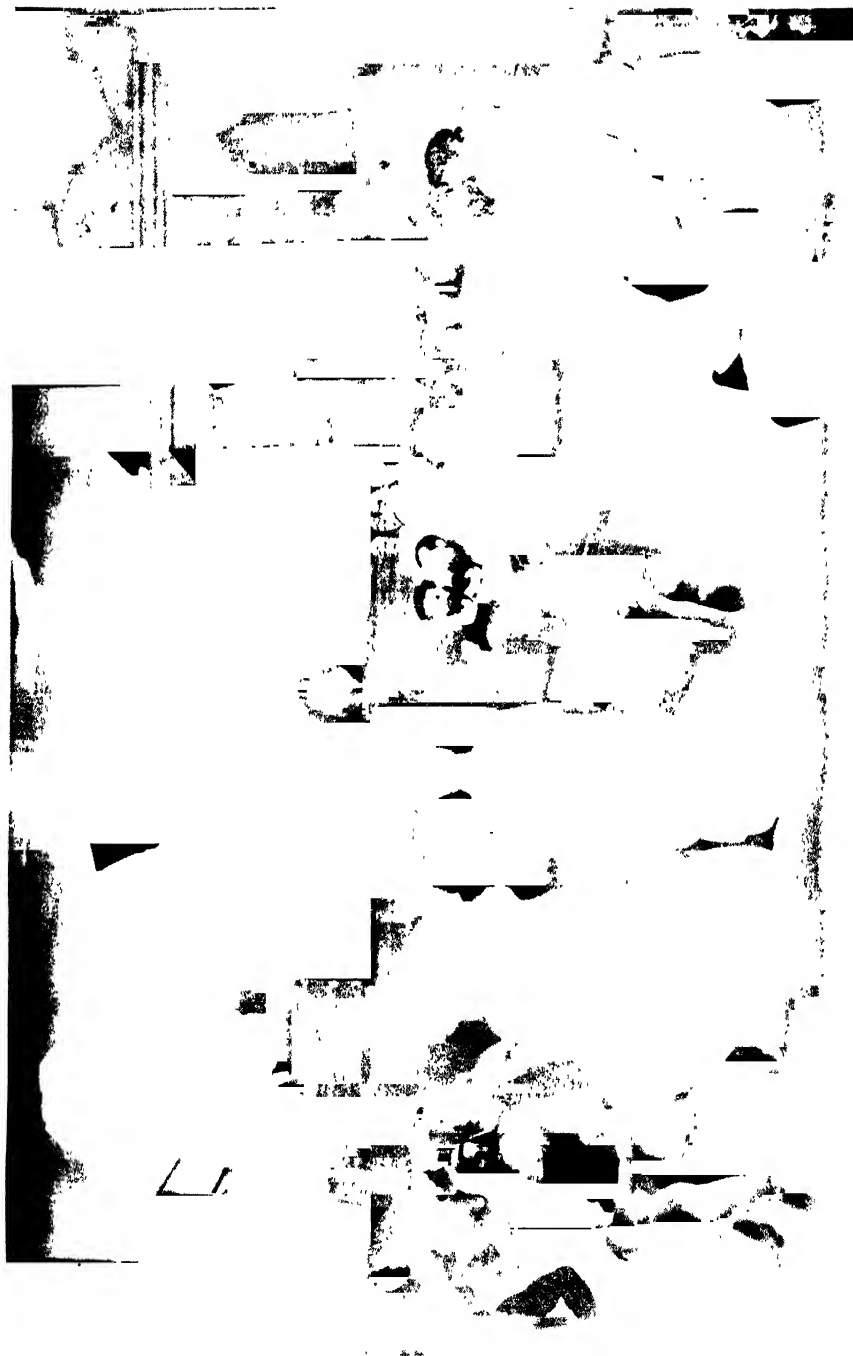


*Cambridge, Massachusetts, Dana Collection*

JASON RETURNING TO DEMAND HIS FATHER'S KINGDOM: SKETCH, 1807-8 [Cat. No 42]



PLATE XIV



*Cambridge, Massachusetts, Dana Collection*

JASON RETURNING TO DEMAND HIS FATHER'S KINGDOM, 1807-8 [Cat. No. 41]

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*Charleston, South Carolina, Carolina Art Association, Gibbs Memorial Art Gallery*

DAVID PLAYING BEFORE SAUL, 1835-8 [Cat. No. 43]

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*Cambridge, Massachusetts, Dana Collection*

DIDO AND ANNA, 1805-8 [*Cat. No. 45*]

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*Cambridge, Massachusetts, Dana Collection*

THREE MEN TALKING: DRAWING, 1807-  
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*Waltham, Massachusetts, Mrs. Arthur Lyman*

FRANCIS DANA CHANNING, 1808 9 [Cat. No. 51]

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*Walham, Massachusetts, Mrs. Arthur Lyman*

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*Boston, Museum of Fine Arts*

THE POOR AUTHOR AND THE RICH BOOKSELLER, 1811 [*Cat. No. 62*]

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*Boston, Estate of Miss Rose L. Dexter*

THE VALENTINE, 1809-11 [*Car. No.* 63]



PLATE XXII



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*New York, Countess Laslo Szechenyi*

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*Boston, Museum of Fine Arts*

WILLIAM ELLERY CHANNING, 1809-11 [*Cat. No. 65*]

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*Santa Barbara, California, Mrs. John Amory Jeffries*

MRS. WILLIAM CHANNING, 1811 [*Cat. No. 66*]

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*Philadelphia, The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts*

THE DEAD MAN REVIVED BY TOUCHING THE BONES OF THE PROPHET ELISHA  
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Baltimore, Mrs. J. A. Bliss

J. A. Bliss

STUDY FOR THE HEAD OF ST PETER IN PRISON, 1812 [Cat. No. 72]

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*New York, Countess Laslo Szechenyi*

THE ANGEL RELEASING ST. PETER FROM PRISON: SKETCH, 1812 [*Cat. No. 71*]

PLATE XXVIII



*Boston, Museum of Fine Arts*

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CHRIST HEALING THE SICK, 1813 [Cat. No. 74]  
A study in sepia and white

*Cambridge, Massachusetts, Dana Collection*



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*London, National Portrait Gallery*

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE, 1814 [*Cat. No. 81*]

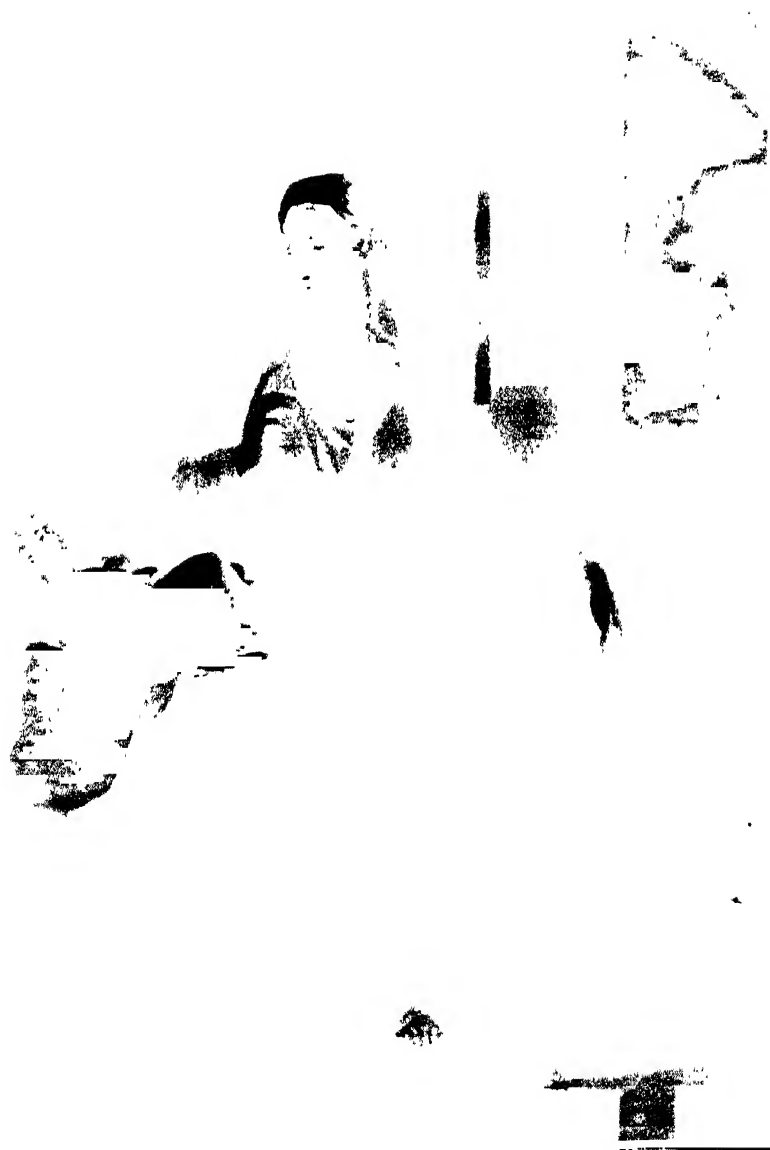
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*Boston, The Boston Athenaeum*

BENJAMIN WEST, 1814 [*Cat. No. 82*]

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*Easton, Mrs. John Briggs Potter*

A MOTHER WATCHING HER SLEEPING CHILD, 1814 [*Cat. No. 80*]

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*Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, The M. and M. Karolik Collection*

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*Cambridge, Massachusetts, Dana Collection*

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*Boston, The Boston Athenaeum*

ISAAC OF YORK, 1817 [*Cat. No. 94*]

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*Boston, Museum of Fine Arts*

HEAD OF A JEW, 1817 [*Cat. No. 96*]

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*New York Public Library*

WOUTER VAN TWILLER'S DECISION IN THE CASE OF WANDLE SCHOONHOVEN  
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PLATE XXXVIII



*Cambridge, Massachusetts, Dana Collection*

BELSHAZZAR'S FEAST: STUDY, 1817 [Cat. No. 101]

PLATE XXXIX



*Boston, Museum of Fine Arts*

BELSHAZZAR'S FEAST: COLOR STUDY, 1817 [Cat. No. 102]

PLATE XL

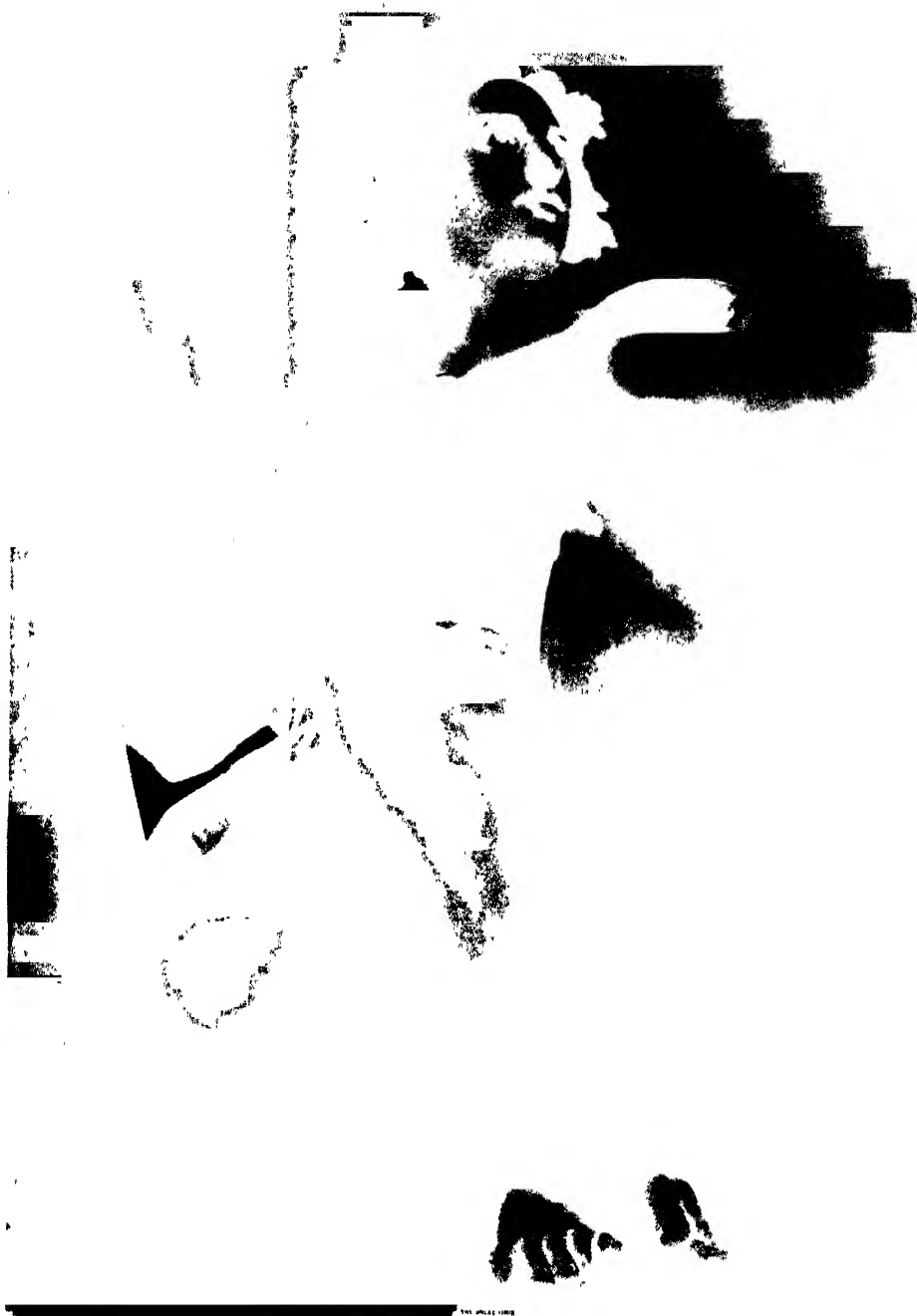


Cambridge, Massachusetts. Dana Collection

BELSHAZZAR'S FEAST, 1817-43 [Cat. No. 100]

PLATE XLI

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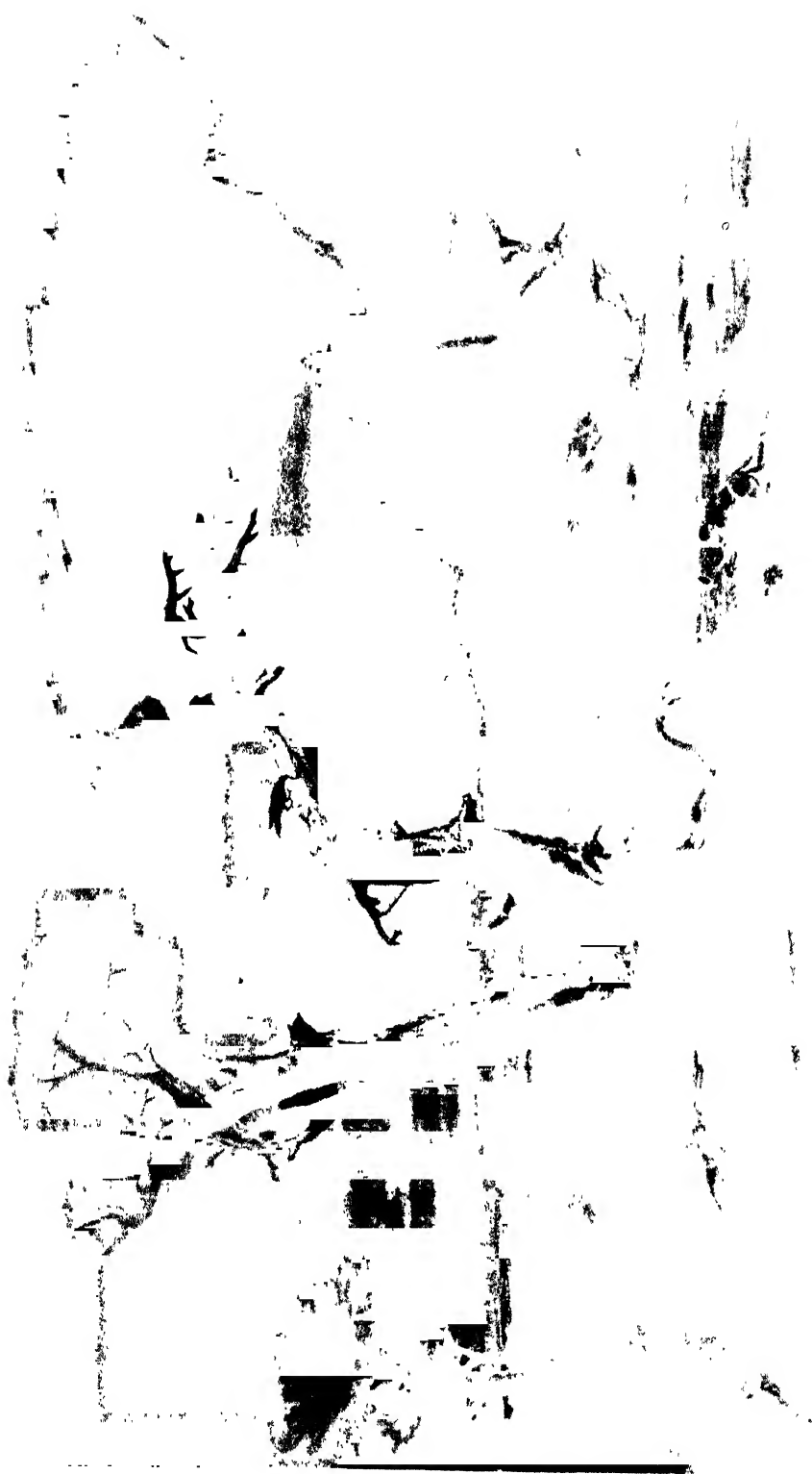


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*Cambridge, Massachusetts, Dana Collection*

URIEL IN THE SUN, 1817 [*Cat. No. 106*]

PLATE XLII



*Boston, Museum of Fine Arts*

ELIJAH IN THE DESERT, 1818 [*Cat. No. 107*]

PLATE XLIII



*Petworth, Sussex, Lord Leconfield*

JACOB'S DREAM, 1817 [Cat. No. 105]

PLATE XLIV



*Boston, Mrs. Algernon Coolidge*

THE SISTERS, *before* 1818 [*Cat. No. 109*]

PLATE XLV



*Brookline, Massachusetts, Mr. Theodore Lyman*

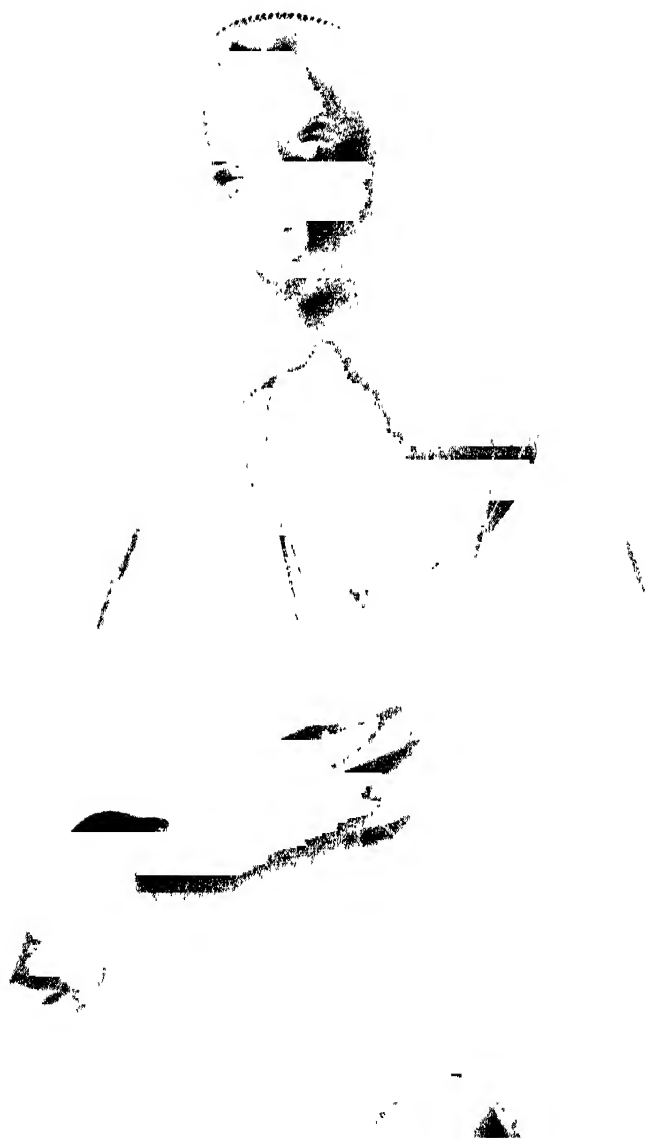
SAMUEL WILLIAMS, *before* 1818 [Cat. No. 110]



PLATE XLVI



PLATE XLVII



*Boston, Miss Ellen Bullard*

BEATRICE, 1819 [*Cat. No. 120*]

PLATE XLVIII



*Detroit, The Detroit Institute of Arts*

ITALIAN SHEPHERD BOY, 1819 [*Cat. No. 121*]

PLATE XLIX



*New Haven, Yale University*

JEREMIAH DICTATING HIS PROPHECY OF THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM TO  
BARUCH THE SCRIBE, 1820 [*Cat. No. 122*]

PLATE I



*Amherst, Massachusetts, Museum of Fine Arts, Amherst College*

SAUL AND THE WITCH OF ENDOR, 1820 [Cat. No. 123]

PLATE LI



*New York, Mr. Victor Spark*

LANDSCAPE, EVENING, 1821 [*Cat. No. 126*]

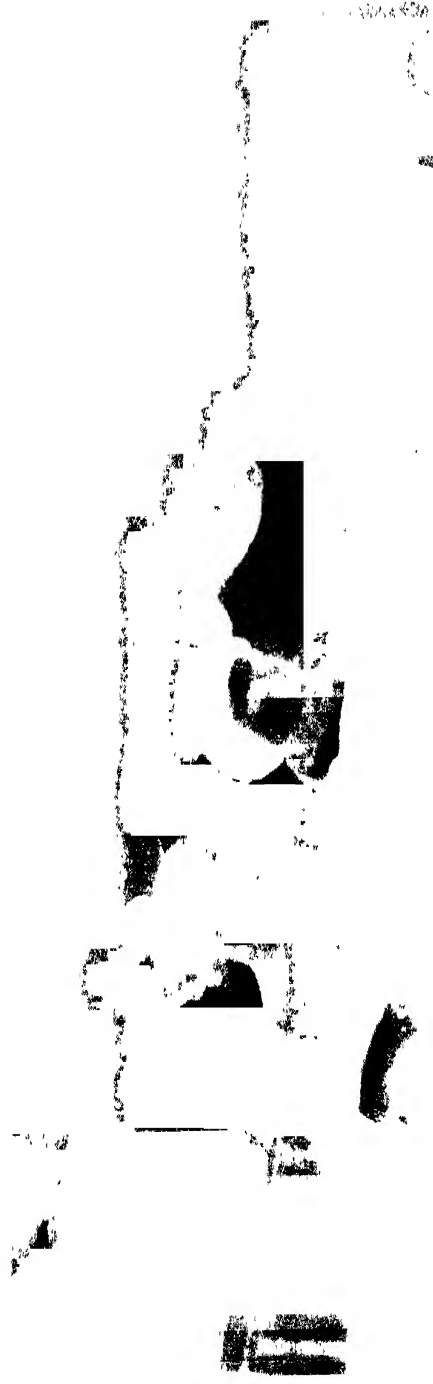
PLATE LII



*Detroit, The Detroit Institute of Arts*

ITALIAN LANDSCAPE, ca. 1830 [Cat. No. 133]

PLATE LIII



*Washington, D.C., Mr. John M. Cabot*

LORENZO AND JESSICA, 1832 [Cat. No. 138]



PLATE LIV



*Boston, Estate of Thornton K. Lotbrop*

THE EVENING HYMN, 1835 [*Car. No. 142*]

PLATE LV



*Boston, Museum of Fine Arts*

LANDSCAPE, AMERICAN SCENERY: TIME, AFTERNOON, WITH A SOUTHWEST HAZE, 1835 [Cat. No. 143]

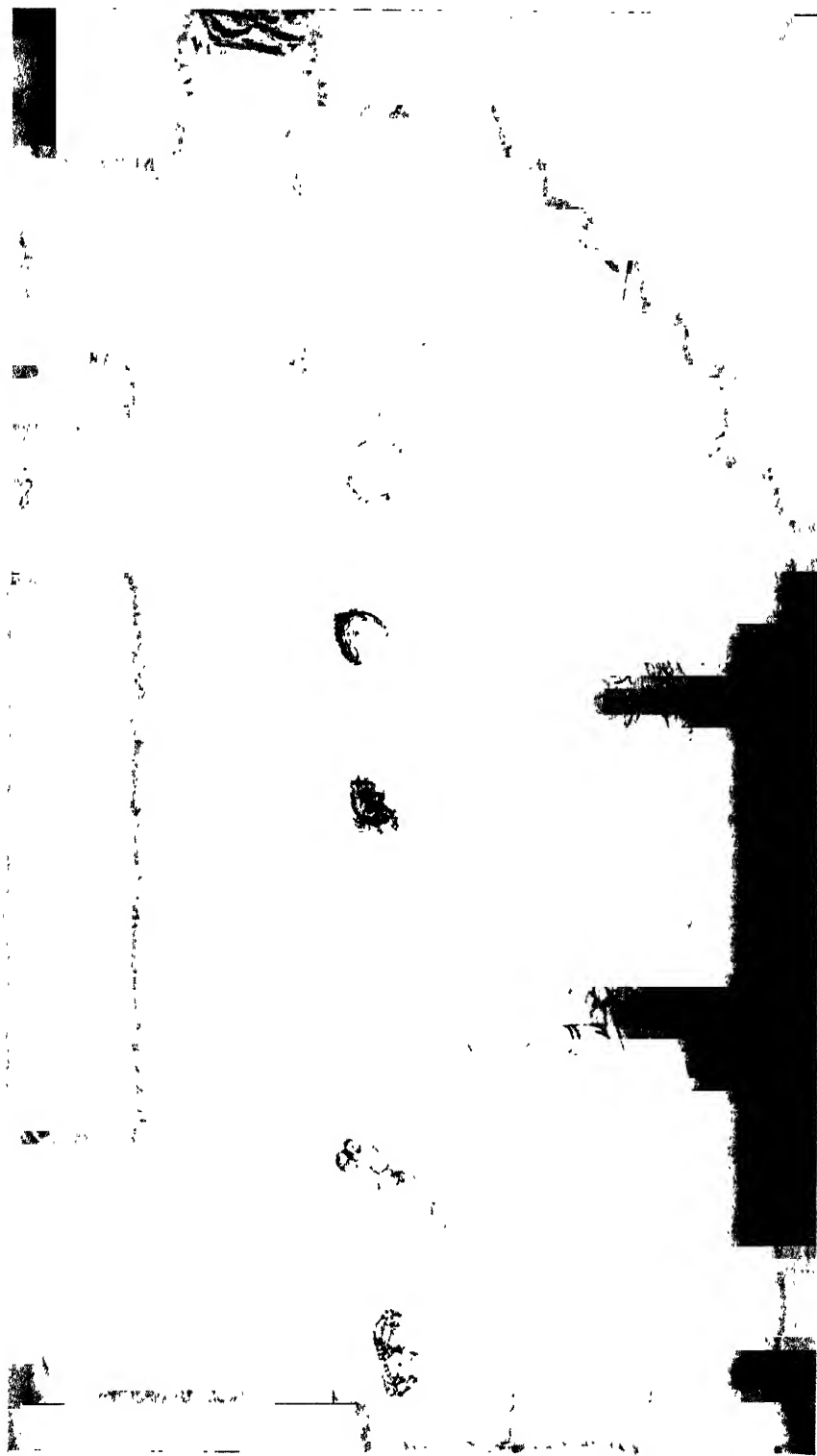
PLATE LVI



*Boston, Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities*

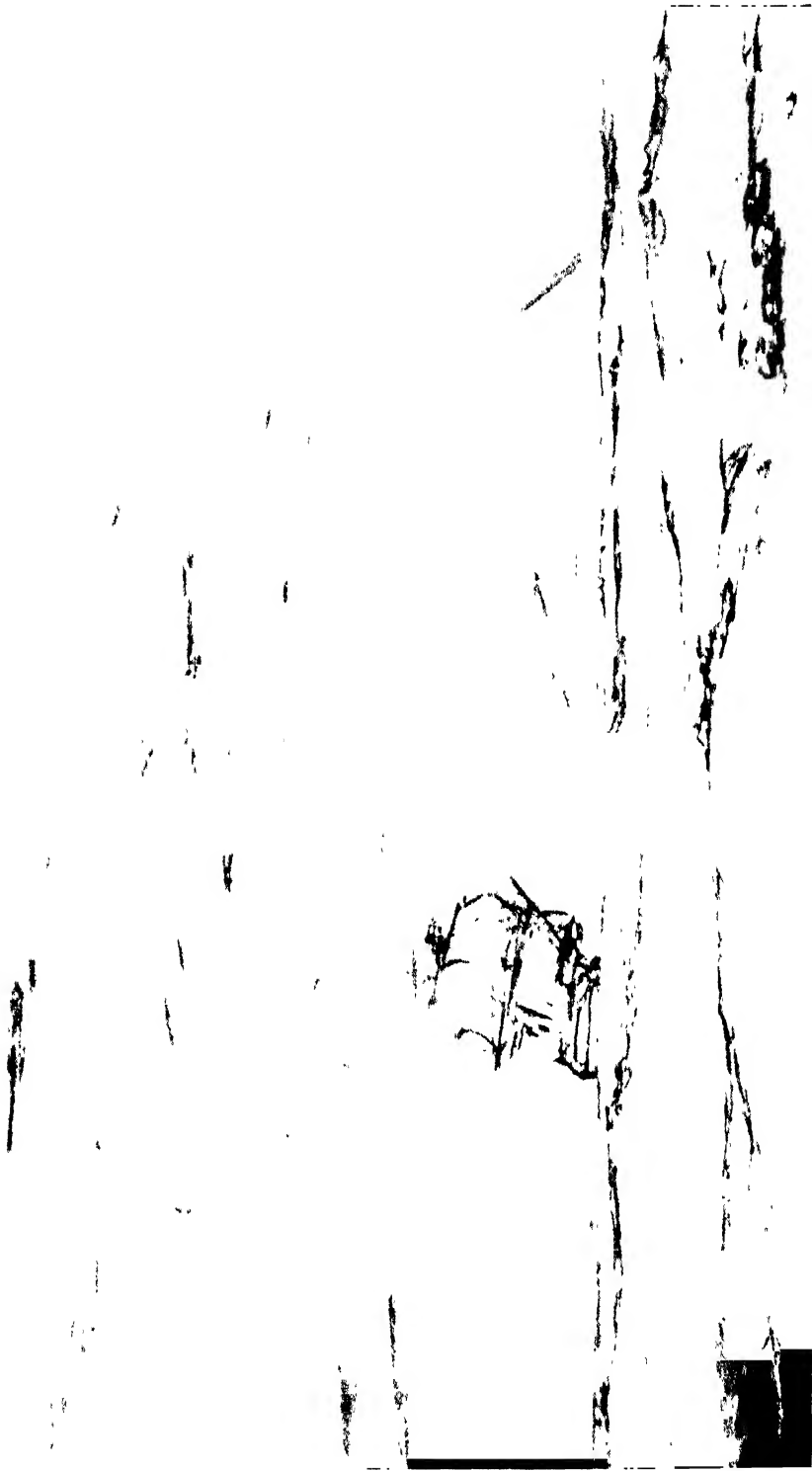
ROSALIE, 1835 [*Cat. No.* 144]

PLATE LVII



*Cambridge, Massachusetts, Dana Collection*

TITANIA'S COURT, before 1837 [Cat. No. 145]



*Cambridge, Massachusetts, Dana Collection*

SHIP IN A SQUALL, before 1837 [Cat. No. 147]  
A chalk drawing on canvas

PLATE LIX



*Cambridge, Massachusetts, Dana Collection*

THE DEATH OF KING JOHN, *ca.* 1837 [Cat. No. 149]  
An unfinished painting



















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